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THE TWIN BUCKSKINS.



BY W. J. HAMILTON

A ROUND BLACK HEAD AND PONDEROUS SHOULDERS WERE THRUST UP THROUGH THE RUBBISH,
IT WAS THE GIANT NEGRO, BIG SAM.

The Twin Buckskins;

OR,

SAM'S LONG TRAIL.

BY W. J. HAMILTON.

CHAPTER I.

THE BROTHERS.

A RIVER in the depths of a northern forest, walled in by grand old trees on every side—a deep, turbid river, gliding slowly down among the sedges on the bank. Crowds of aquatic birds from time to time came out of the cover, and dove in the dark depths, seizing the coveted food, and rising to the surface to devour it. A stately deer, with branching antlers, and sleek, shining sides, came down to the bank to drink. Everything told of a primeval wilderness, robed in all the beauty first given by God, before the hand of man had touched it.

A sound disturbed the stillness, and the deer stood erect, peering into the bushes. All at once he sprang away, as the branches on the other shore parted, and a young man came out upon the bank.

He was dressed in the garb of a hunter—tanned undershirt and leggings, and Indian moccasins. He held a long rifle, thrown carelessly across his arm, and a knife hung in his belt. His age might have been twenty-four.

He appeared to be in no hurry after he had reached the river, but sat down upon the sunny bank, looking out upon the stream. The birds, becoming accustomed to his presence, came out again one by one, and began to feed as usual. The young man looked at them with a quiet smile. He was one who took pleasure in God's handiwork, and reveled in his domain. He who cannot take pleasure in a beautiful landscape has little that is good and true in his heart.

The young man, gazing out upon the river, grew weary after a little, and then fell off into a doze. Perhaps he had slept an hour, perhaps more, when a sudden, shrill, startling cry rung out upon the air. There was nothing wonderful in it—only the cry of the great fish-hawk sailing over the water. But at the first sound he started eagerly erect, and placing his hand to his mouth, uttered a shrill note, an exact imitation of the one he had just heard. The cry was answered again, and then he sat down and waited.

Fifteen minutes passed, when a person came cautiously out upon the other shore, looking eagerly across. The young hunter sprang up and called:

"Alph?"

"Are you there, Ben? How shall I cross?"

"Take a log. We are on a business which requires that we should not fear to wet our buckskins."

The other laughed, and in a few moments pushed through the sedges a log, to which he had lashed his rifle and ammunition. He soon stood out upon the shore. What a wonder was here! The same in every feature, joint, and

limb, the two men stood together. You could not tell them one from the other. The wives of the two Dromios of Shakespeare could not have been more astonished than any person would have been who saw the two foresters together.

"Ah, lad!" said the first, shaking the hand of his brother, "how have you been?"

"Capital!" said Alph. "You were here before me."

"I always get along in time," said Ben. "What made you so late?"

"Oh, if you calculate the time I spend over my meals compared with yours, you will understand why I lost an hour. Which way now?"

"Our business is to find out the whereabouts of the French, and report to the commanding general. But here we are on Canada Creek, and the French, probably, a hundred and thirty miles away. We must be up and doing."

"Just as you say, Ben."

"You will take command of the expedition, Alph?"

"There, there, Ben; none of that. Don't you know what 'Dromio' said to his brother?"

"We came into the world like brother and brother. Now let's go hand in hand, *not* one before the other."

"Come on, then," said the other, springing up, and throwing his long rifle to a trail. The two plunged into the forest.

The period at which our story commences is that dismal time in Colonial history known as the "French and Indian War." During this struggle, the fearful massacres which occurred have made it a blot upon the history of the times.

The French, under their able but unscrupulous leaders, ravaged the country, capturing forts, and letting the lawless bands of Indians under them riot in blood. The historical reader peruses with horror the records of the periods in which *Oswego* and *William Henry* gleam out.

There was one prominent man upon the English side, and one only, who understood the nature of the Indian tribes and treated them accordingly. The control this man gained over the "Six Nations," and especially over the more powerful tribe, the Mohawks, was wonderful. Through all the long and trying wars between the English and French for possessions in America, the majority of these tribes stood firm for British interests, and served as an effectual shield against the aggressions of the French. It was in the Indian country that the bloody battles were fought which have a place in history. The English had early erected a chain of forts along the Hudson, and the Mohawk. Against these the efforts of the French were mainly directed.

General William Johnson (afterward Sir William) had early laid before the Government the necessity of a chain of works in this region, both to keep the Indians in order and to drive back the French. Proverbially slow in everything regarding the Colonies, the English Government did nothing for some years. Those whom it sent over to command the armies were not the right ones; they did not understand how to deal with the Indians or the provincial troops; who were, in reality, the main dependence of the country in wars against the savages and the French.

With this prelude, we will understand the mis-

sion of the two brothers. They were known far and wide along the border, as fearless wood rangers and daring scouts. The settlers on the frontier blessed them, for many a time they had saved life by giving warning of the coming foe.

They were born to a different heritage. But their father, a gentleman of broken fortunes, had left the home of his nativity behind him, and turned his back upon the graves of his fathers, and with these two sons, pledges of the affection of a lost and dearly-loved wife, came to this country. He lived to see his sons grow up to manhood, and then laid calmly down to die. They grew to love the woods and its mysteries. In times of peace they ranged the forest, hunting the deer in the leafy coverts, fighting the panther in his native woods, and chasing the bear into its dens in the mountain. And when the sound of savage warfare was heard along the border, they took their rifles, tightened their belts, and went out to the work before them.

General Johnson knew his men when he sent them out. In all the arts of savage life, of their tricks and subtleties, they were perfect masters. They were born scouts.

The two pressed on together, talking pleasantly as they proceeded. They were in that stretch of level country north of Utica, part of the Mohawk Valley, then the property of the greatest tribe of the Six Nations, the Mohawks. The country is cut up by little streams, and, further north, as you near Trenton Falls, rises into highlands. Into this hilly country the scouts were making their way, and struck the east branch of Canada Creek high above the falls.

Then they sat down at noontide and cooked a meal. It was soon done. A piece of venison, suspended over a little fire, no larger than a man's hand, soon received all the cooking deemed necessary by the brothers. They ate their meal, and then lay down in the shadow of a rock, and began a conversation.

"I don't know that it is necessary to blow ourselves by tramping in this hot sun," said Alph. "We can make up for lost time by traveling late. You did not have time to tell me what you saw at Edward."

"Pshaw!" said Ben. "They are going to putter on, just as usual. The only man who knows anything about Indians and their ways, General Johnson, has his hands tied by the 'orders' of men who have no more business to command him than I have—no, not so much; for I think I know what ought to be done, and they have not the faintest idea. They send over a lot of 'red-coats' because they have fought well in battalions on European fields, and expect them to know how to carry on a war with the American Indian—to drill, form battalion and charge bayonet, in the thickets around the Horicon! I tell you, Indians must be fought in their own way, or they will not be overcome. What is wanted is a good body of provincials—men who have lived upon the border and fought Indians upon every river."

"You are right, Ben; but you will never see the time when the English Government will trust the provincials. British ministers ought to do it, but they won't. You have not asked me what I have to say."

"What is it? They were telling at Edward

of a terrific defeat of Braddock in the wilderness of Pennsylvania. Is it so?"

"It is true; the most sickening story it ever was my fate to tell. The army which marched out so elated, so full of hope, to the capture of Du Quesne is now broken and defeated, sheltered by the walls of Fort Cumberland. You know under what circumstances the expedition gathered, and how joyously I set forward to join it. But Braddock was in a hurry. He had two thousand men with him at Cumberland and more were coming on. But on the 10th of June, he started out with this force."

"Why did he not wait for the rest?"

"It was thought by him and many of his officers, that Fort Du Quesne would be reinforced if he did not hasten the expedition. This might be, and we should have been successful in our work, even with the men we had, if care had been taken in the march."

"Were there any provincials?"

"Yes, a body of Virginians, under Colonel Washington; and they were the only men in the army who knew how to fight Indians. As we neared the fort, word came in that we must hurry on, or reinforcements would be in before us. Braddock then lessened his force still more. He selected twelve hundred of the best troops and hurried on, leaving Colonel Dunbar with the rest of the men. All the baggage that could not be carried was in his hands. More haste less speed. I heard Colonel Washington ask the general if he might not lead the provincials in advance. Braddock looked at him crossly enough."

"I have arranged my order of march, colonel."

"But, sir, the troops you have sent in advance do not understand Indian fighting."

"They are his Majesty's regular troops, sir, and know their duty. You know *your* position."

"Washington went away looking disgusted enough. But he took his place as before, and the march was pushed on. You never saw such a jungle. But the troops were full of spirit, and it pained me to see so many brave fellows marching on to their deaths. Lieutenant-Colonel Gage led the advance. He was a brave fellow, but knew as much about what he was doing as Braddock did. All at once we heard the rattle of rifles, and the yells of the savages. In a few moments, back came the vanguard on a dead run, and plunging into the ranks, made the greatest confusion you ever saw."

"Then we saw how it was. The rascals had waited until the whole army were fairly in the woods, and then they opened upon us right and left. Not an enemy was in sight, but from every tree, and bush, and log, rifles gleamed and bullets hissed out upon us. We did our duty, God knows, and the brave death of Braddock almost atoned for his foolish rashness. Three times his horse went down, and as many times he mounted again, and strove to rally his troops. I don't blame them for being scared! It seemed as if pandemonium had broken loose about us. And the fire was withering; our men sunk down in scores. Every mounted officer, except Washington, was down. The ranks were thinning, and men rushed this way and that. A rifle cracked close to me, as I fought

among the provincials, and then I saw Brad-dock fall. The troops only wanted that! They would not, *could* not fly, while that man rode up and down the line; but when he fell, they broke and fled in dismay. Not the provincials, thank God; *they* saved the army!"

"How?"

"Washington threw them into the rear of our army (they were in the flank before), and gave the copper-skins backshot for shot. There were not many of them, I don't think. It was the surprise and kind of ground that did it. Never in my time did I witness a defeat so sweeping, so utter. Half our men and two-thirds of the officers lay dead or wounded upon the earth. Those who were wounded were worse off than the dead, for no earthly power could save them. They were butchered upon the ground.

"We fell back and followed the army, on its way, when we knew that it was safe. No fear of catching *them*. They ran like deer; and when they came up to Dunbar's command, *they* turned tail and never stopped until they got to Fort Cumberland. I heard when I came away that Dunbar was going to leave Washington's provincials there and go to Philadelphia. They will trust the provincials in *that* province now."

"And so that is the end. God grant no such disaster befall us. There will not, if they will only let Johnson alone. The French will bring a cloud of red-skins down with them from above."

"You had better believe it. Dieskau will lead them. The old baron is a brave man, and is not so cruel as some Frenchmen. Shall we go now?"

"Yes. What course shall we take?"

"I think we should go down the river, and pass the Middletons on our way."

"Umph," said the other, looking at his brother with an amused smile. "You think we had better pass by Middletons?"

"Yes; why not?"

"No reason in the world, my dear boy. On the contrary, I think it the best course, if,"—and the young man smiled jocosely, "you will engage not to stay too long at the cabin."

"No more of that, an thou lovest me," said the other.

The Mohawk is one of the most beautiful streams in nature's vast expanse. But the brothers had no time to notice its beauties. They had work before them.

They found a canoe among the reeds upon the shore. It was not left there by chance. These men had followed the example of all versed in woodcraft, and had a canoe upon every stream through which they scouted. They were soon seated in their little craft, and floated swiftly down the creek. A mile below they emerged into the Mohawk itself, and turning the head of the canoe down-stream, with little labor at the paddles, barely enough to keep her steady, they took the course of the current.

The young men knew the way. They had scouted over this ground a dozen times, and Ben, for certain reasons, had visited it before. What those reasons were will shortly appear.

"Do you think we shall find Middleton at home?" said that worthy.

"Don't know. I suppose so, however, unless he is out on a hunt. That need make no difference to you, brother Ben."

"I told you to quit *that*, Alph. What does Flora care for me more than for you?"

"Nonsense, Ben. Don't be a donkey. You know you worship the very ground under Flora Middleton's feet, and I know, if you do not, that there is no earthly being who can make her pretty little heart palpitate at his coming as you can."

"Do you think so, Alph?" cried the other, eagerly. "I don't know how it may be. Perhaps you are right."

"Yes; and Ben, take the advice of a brother. While you have a chance, secure her; ask her to be your wife."

While he was speaking, he placed the head of the canoe toward the shore. The bushes hung low about the bank, and the brothers forced their way through them and gained footing on the rocks above. A beautiful girl, clad in European garb, sprung up as they appeared, uttering a little cry of astonishment, and came toward them, holding out her hands.

CHAPTER II.

FLORA MIDDLETON.

THE girl who met them was slight in figure, with the face which is given only to England's daughters. A world of beauty lurked in her dark eye, and in the roses upon cheek and lip. I do not care to describe her. It is enough that Ben Armitage thought her beautiful, and loved her.

She met them with a shy, pleased expression, that became her well. She greeted Alph kindly, but it was in Ben's hand that hers lingered, and he, looking into her starry eyes, had hopes for his future.

"Where is your father?" said Alph.

"He is in the house. Will you go in and see him or shall I call him out?"

"Here he is himself," said a firm voice. A man had come out of the cabin and was shaking hands with Ben vigorously. A stalwart, pale old man, clad in the homespun of the frontier, but with certain things about him which bespoke the gentleman born.

"Boys, I am glad to see you, only—"

"Only what?"

"I know by your looks that you have girded on your armor for battle. Tell me, are we to have trouble along these frontiers?"

"We are; the French emperor has sworn either to drive us from the country, or lose his possessions in America. Look out for bloody times. Swarms of Hurons will join them, and cabins will blaze from Schuyler to Albany; take my word for it."

"You think so?"

"I am certain. Our generals know this, and are already in the field. Oh, if you had been with me at Du Quesne—if you had seen our brave men slaughtered like sheep, by the blind stupidity of English officers. Why will the Government do this, Middleton? Why do they not officer their regiments by such men as your—"

self, who have not only received a military education, but who know the woods? Why do they not call you out of your obscurity and give you a command?"

"You ask questions that I am unable to answer," said Middleton. "You say truly, I have received a military education at the hands of the Government, and hold myself ready to do her a service at any time. If they call me into active service, I shall go out, perhaps."

"We need such men; we have one, at least, in our Southern army."

"Who is that?"

"Colonel Washington. You never saw him, but I tell you, he is of the stuff of which we make heroes. And when he is in battle, he is sublime. His face becomes glorified; it seems no longer the face of a man."

"He is a Virginian?"

"Yes, and kept down, as all provincials are. He is the best leader on our continent to-day, and yet his advice was not taken, and Braddock's army was hurried to destruction."

"You are enthusiastic in his praise."

"He deserves it. His men idolize him. The people along the frontier bless him. He is their guardian-angel. Compelled, with his small force, to guard the whole frontier, he does his work nobly; and though he cannot stop all atrocities, yet he does much good."

"Was the defeat at Du Quesne entire?"

"Utter rout, with the exception of the Virginians, who fought with the utmost courage."

"You make much of the provincials."

"Yes; and the time will come when the provincials will make more of themselves. England does not use the Colonies as they should be used, and the time will come when war will be the result."

"War?"

"Yes, war. Rebellion, if you will have it so."

"The Colonies rebel!"

"Don't make so strange of it; when we hear the muttering of the thunder, and see the dark clouds, we look for rain."

"Have you seen such clouds?"

"Have not you?"

"I wish you young hotheads would learn reason. One can do nothing with you. What could the Colonies do in a war with England?"

"What, indeed! Ah, there is strength of purpose in this fair land of which our rulers never dream. What could they do, if banded together for right? Anything, everything!"

"Why, Ben," said Flora, "one would think you were talking of the French, you are so enthusiastic. Have you reflected that it is England against whom your wrath is aroused—England, who has been a mother to the Colonies?"

"I forget nothing," said the young man, gloomily. "Would to God I could. You know me, Flora Middleton. I am a provincial, and I repel all wrongs to the provinces, and I care not whose hand deals the blow, so long as it is given. What do we care for the ensigns of royalty out in the woods? You remember what they tried to do in Carolina?"

"To what do you refer?"

"To the grand form of government concocted by John Locke for the infant colony of Carolina.

Think of it; barons, earls and dukes for the new world! The log cabins scattered along the Cooper and Ashley, and Cape Fear Rivers, were to be governed by such men. Our sturdy ax-men laughed at such foolishness."

"That was long ago," said Flora.

"They have not got it out of their heads yet, and are trying new plans to domineer over us, hour by hour."

"There, there!" said Middleton. "Let us have no more of this. Flora, the boys must be hungry. Go you into the house, and see that some savory bits from that buck I brought in this morning are cooked for them. I wish to talk with the boys."

Ben looked after her light figure as she glided away, glancing back at them.

"Don't be impatient, Ben," said the father. "I will give you time enough to talk to her by and by. What I wish to ask you, while she is out of hearing, do you think it is safe for us to stay here? Your opinion, Alph!"

The young man mused.

"I don't know how to answer you, Middleton. Here you have everything nice about you, and things look thriving enough. If you go to the settlements, you must expect to come back to find your house and negro-quarters in ruins, and your crops destroyed."

He looked about him. The house was a neat little log structure, strongly built, as was the custom of the times, the logs dovetailed into each other upon the ends. There were two windows in front, which could be closed at any time by heavy shutters, and secured by bars. The doors were of oak, and would require considerable force to move them on their hinges. To the rear of the house, which fronted on the river, a long row of neat log cabins served as quarters for the negroes, who could be seen passing in and out, attending to their household duties. Alph sighed, and the sigh was echoed by Middleton.

"It does seem hard to give it all up, when everything is beginning to look so nicely. I am so happy here, away from the busy life to which I have been accustomed; I revel in the sweets of nature here. There is no such country, take man's depravity away, upon the face of the earth. Must I give it up?"

"I don't deny that there is danger. You yourself know well the nature of the savage in time of war. The bulk of the tribes are in our favor. But in all tribes, even the Mohawk, there are some fellows who will range the border, and commit depredations on the settlers. I know some of these fellows. We have many in our service who cannot be depended on. The nature of an Indian is to be treacherous; and those of the Six Nations carry it out to the utmost."

"Not the chiefs?"

"No, not the chiefs; that is, the older ones, for there are some young hotheads among the chiefs who would be led into mischief by any subtle tongue; and the arch fiend himself is nothing to these fellows who are against us."

"Which ones?"

"The Jesuits."

"You are right. They are a bloodthirsty, crafty, and designing crew."

"You want my opinion. As I said before you are in danger all the time. The French are

JNA

coming upon us, and though you are not directly in their course, roving bands will find you out. Do you think you could stand a siege?"

"I don't know; the house is pretty strong."

"It would depend upon whether they were in haste. If they had the time, they would undoubtedly take it after a while. What force have you?"

"Well, I have six boys, who are strong enough, if they had the pluck."

"But, unluckily, these darkies seldom have that very much-needed article. Pluck is not a plant of rapid growth with them. Have you got Sam yet?"

"Of course; here he comes now."

"Hi—yah! Massa Alph; dat you?"

The speaker was a negro, of such ponderous dimensions that one was almost startled at the sight. "Big Sam" was nearly seven feet high, and of proportionate strength. But his broad face shone with good-humor. He was never known to be very angry, and seldom used his prodigious strength for evil. He was brave as a lion, and his master depended on him as if he were himself. The black loved his master, and as for Flora he idolized her.

Next to his master and mistress he liked the brothers—and now came up to greet them with a smile which extended across his entire face from ear to ear.

"We were just talking about you, Sam," said Alph, "and we wanted to know how many Indians you could take care of, for the sake of Miss Flora."

"Injins?"

"Yes."

"Tryin' to take Miss Flora 'way?"

"Yes."

"'Bout a t'ousan'," said Sam, confidently.

Alph laughed. "In that case, Middleton, you need have no fears, for I do not suppose they can bring that number against you. You don't think that you would run away, then, Sam, when the Indians come?"

Sam straightened up proudly, and threw out his broad shoulders with a dignified expression:

"P'raps you don't know me, Massa Alph, and p'raps you do; but if you t'inks *dat* mean of me, you don't know anyt'ing about me. I ain't a coward. I lub de very groun' Miss Flora walks on, and I don't say it to brag, but cause I means it. I w'u'd die fer her as quick as you would, ef thar was trouble fer her."

"I have no doubt of it, Sam. You are a brave fellow, and I was only joking. There is no reason to fear. I don't know but there may be danger, because so many Indians are around, and I wanted to put you on your guard. You understand me?"

Yaas, Massa Alph. I nebber t'ought you mean to t'ink *dat* bad ob me. S'pose dem Injin come, I's take care of them."

Sam went on, and Alph resumed his conversation with Middleton, for Ben had taken advantage of the interruption by Sam to slip into the house.

"The best advice I can give you is this: we are going on a scout, and shall be absent a couple of weeks. At the end of that time I can tell you much better what is best for you, than I can now, because I shall know the plans of the

French, upon which the movements of the Indians hinge completely. Here is what you better do. Remain quietly at home, and prepare for a move. Strengthen your house as much as possible, and have your ammunition and rifles in order. Don't make any unnecessary parade of it, as that might give a hint to some of the red renegades about the country."

"Shall I tell Flora what you say?"

"Not yet. Ben?—Oh! confound him he has cleared out. It is all I can do to keep that boy in order. I don't know that we can ever cure him of that, but by giving him Flora for a wife. Now, I wanted him to tell this to her."

"Oh, let him alone, you confirmed old bachelor. Flora and he agree perfectly, and I hope some time to see them married. What were you going to say?"

"That you had better stay here until you hear from us, or know that we are taken. The path we must travel is full of danger. As for that, we have grown accustomed to it, and can face it like men. It is only when we have such helpless things as that to care for, that we begin to fear. Hark!"

Flora was singing, in the house, a sweet, low ballad, such as finds a way into the heart of man—singing with a careless abandon, and with feeling in the tone. They went in. Ben was sitting at the side of the hearth, joining now and then in the sweet refrain.

"Oh, you two; what punishment is due for desertion? As your superior officer, I ought to have you court-martialed on the spot."

Ben laughed. "Don't interrupt," he said.

"Here is an interruption of another sort," said Alph, looking toward the door, which stood open. Two Indians had glided in and taken their seats upon a low bench near the door. The larger and older of the two was a powerful fellow, in the prime of life, the buckskin falling away from his broad shoulder and showing the strong muscle beneath. He was clad in the simple dress of the Indian, an unadorned buckskin shirt and leggings. The shirt was gathered about his waist by a thong of buckskin, and in it hung a tomahawk and knife. He also had a musket, which he allowed to lean against the wall.

His companion was a young man, perhaps twenty-five years of age, not so powerful as the other, but with a certain lithe, panther-like agility in his movements that spoke well for him. He had a sharp, cunning face, and an eye that gleamed with fervid earnestness from under his dark brows. He was dressed with more taste than the other savage, for his moccasins were beaded, and the shirt fancifully wrought with stained porcupine-quills. His weapons were the same as the other's, and he carried them with a jaunty grace that spoke the savage Crichton.

Middleton advanced to greet them. It was no uncommon thing for the savages to stop at the house, when they grew tired of the chase, and rest a while.

"Good-day, friend," said he, extending his hand to the older Indian. "Is my brother well?"

"Tired," said he. "Come long way—want rest."

"My brother is very welcome. Will he smoke a pipe?"

He took down a long reed-stem from over the mantle, and proceeded to light it. This done, he passed it to the Indian, who hesitated a moment, and then, raising it to his lips, took two or three whiffs, and passed it to the other. He followed his example, and was passing it to Alph, when that person dashed the pipe suddenly to the earth, and seemed ready to fly at the throat of the Indian. He sat unmoved, playing carelessly with the handle of his knife. But there was a fierce gleam in his dark eye, telling of a fire burning within, which a very little wind would fan into flame.

"Renegade!" shouted Alph.

"Who is he?" demanded Middleton.

"Hau-do, the renegade Mohawk. He never shall smoke with me."

"Why is my young brother mad at Hau-do?" said he, in a musical voice. "What has he done?"

"He has been a spy for the French."

"My brother is right; but did not the English drive him out of their wigwams, and say to the Mohawk chiefs, send him out from among you? That is over now. The English were wrong, and Hau-do is again a chief in his tribe. He is without stain. His heart is pure."

"How am I to know that this is true?"

The Indian drew a paper from his breast, and handed it to him.

"Read," he said. "Talking-paper."

"Read it aloud?"

"Yes."

Alph opened the paper, and read as follows:

"Know, all men, that Hau-do, the Mohawk, is free from imputations against his good name, and is again a scout in our army."

JOHNSON."

"Umph!" said Alph. "He gave you this, did he? Well, I hope you are reformed; but, until I am sure of it, I am not your friend. Are you a scout now?"

"My own business; why you ask? No like me, I don't care; take care own self; let me 'lone!"

The savage drew himself up moodily, and sat upright in his corner, looking at the young man, from time to time, under his heavy brows. It was very evident that he bore him no good-will, and would embrace the first opportunity to get even with him for his attack upon him. His companion sat silent, watching the motions of the two, and drawing little attention to himself. His wandering eye took in all the appurtenances of the cabin for further use. Ben was watching him furtively, and did not like the expression of his eye. But the meal was soon ready, and the whole party sat down to partake. When it was over, the savages rose, without a word, and left the house, plunging at once into the depths of the forest.

"I do not like that young Indian," said Alph. "He is of a traitorous brood. I like not these renegades, find them where you will."

"Then you do not believe in his contrition?"

"Not in the least. He may, mark you, for policy's sake, be friendly to us for awhile, and do us good service; but he cannot be relied on,

and the very first opportunity he will turn against us."

"The older one is less to my taste than the younger," said Ben. "His eyes were everywhere. He was taking note of the position of the windows and doors, their fastenings and strength. In case your house ever is attacked by Indians, that fellow, with his knowledge, would be a bad opponent."

"How do you know that?"

"I had my eyes upon him all the time."

"Father," said Flora, suddenly, "you are trying to deceive me."

Middleton started.

"I do not understand you."

"You fear an attack from the Indians. I know you do. Your getting me out of the way, that you might talk with Alph, was not lost upon me. I know why it was done. Trust me; if there is danger, I think I can face it bravely."

"Bless the girl!" said the old man. "She has the old spirit in her, and is not afraid. Seriously, then, my child, we do not know of any immediate danger; but, with bands of savages prowling about the country, we may be attacked at any moment, as you very well know. That is all, upon my honor."

"Believe me," said Ben, "if I thought you in any certain danger, I should not leave you, neither would Alph. But we are in the king's service, and must work for him. We will be off now."

"Yes, we had better," said the other. "We have far to go, and much to do. The French are coming down from the north, and General Johnson has set us to work. We pull well together, he says."

The two brothers tightened their belts, looked to the condition of their rifles, and drew the buckskin coverings more closely over the locks, before they began their march. The old man shook hands with them, and prudently retired into the house, while Alph as discreetly went on his way alone, after kissing Flora, not looking back to see the parting of the lovers.

"You are going into danger, Ben," said Flora, looking up at him with tearful eyes. "You will be very careful for my sake, won't you?"

Of course he promised all things; and the two found so much to say, that Alph grew impatient, and called to him to hurry. Pausing only to snatch a kiss from her willing lips, he joined his brother in the edge of the woods.

CHAPTER III.

IN THE WOODS.

It was about three in the afternoon when the brothers left the house. They went on with the practiced step of the hunter trained to the forest, moving with cautious steps, keeping a careful watch on every side. They were not the ones to be caught in an Indian ambush. They conversed in a low tone as they went on:

"Where were the French gathering?"

It was Alph who spoke.

"At Crown Point."

"Have you been there?"

"Yes, I have been in the very midst of the fort. Little did Dieskau suppose that the mad hunter, who furnished so much amusement for

his young officers, was a man for whom a French cord has been made for many a day."

"Oh, yes; they would like to catch us, but we shall bother them yet. Dieskau is a smart man, but we have been too sharp for him so far. Do you know I am on the lookout for that renegade?"

"He is far ahead."

"Perhaps he is; but do you remark that we no longer see his trail?"

The young man looked quickly downward.

"This is the direct route he must have taken. By heavens, you are right! They are behind us."

"It is dangerous to leave an Indian who bears us no good-will, so close in our rear."

Ben considered a moment.

"Break into a run," said he, at length. "Keep it up until you get around that bend, and then get behind a tree."

Ben started off, and Alph, taking the hint at once, followed him at a rapid pace. As soon as the bend hid the road behind from their sight, they turned suddenly aside, and sought shelter under the spreading boughs of a huge pine. They had not long to wait. In a few minutes quick steps were heard coming down the forest-path, and the two rascals, who had left the house half an hour before, came in sight.

"Oh, you beauties!" muttered Alph. "Now, I should consider it no sin to send a bullet through that young dandy's head, especially as I know that he would take my life without scruple."

"You are right, and we have only to decide whether to shoot them down without mercy, or to teach them a lesson they will not soon forget. What do you say to seizing them, and giving them a sound flogging?"

"I don't doubt we could do it," said the other, looking rather proudly down upon his strong young limbs. "At them, then!"

The two Indians had arrived nearly opposite the trees behind which the young men were hidden, and were dashing on in hot pursuit, when each was appalled by the vision of a rifle presented to his naked breast, with a peremptory demand to lay down their arms. They complied, somewhat unwillingly, with the request, particularly as it was backed by the soft solicitation of a rifle. Guns, tomahawks and knives were cast in a heap upon the earth.

"Take the belt of your friend," said Alph, addressing the younger man, "and bind his hands behind his back."

The young Indian looked at him steadily for a moment, as if he intended to rebel, but the ominous click of the gunlock told him that he had better comply at once, and without making trouble. The hands of the stout Indian were soon bound tightly, putting him out of the way of doing mischief.

"Now tie him," said Alph, addressing his brother.

Ben laid down his rifle, and bound the young chief in the same manner as his companion, and, in addition, with his own and his brother's belts, tied them firmly to small saplings, facing each other. The savages looked on in impotent rage, as their captors coolly began to strip their shoulders bare, and prepare them for frontier justice.

"Why did you linger behind us?" said Alph, placing himself before the young chief.

"Go where I choose, s'pose. Woods mine to walk in, well as yours."

"Don't be insolent, my young beauty; I ask it as a friend. Why did you loiter behind?"

"Fin' out bes' you can."

"I mean to do that; or rather, I know already. You followed us with the intention of shooting us at the first opportunity—did you not?"

The Indian became sullenly silent. They knew that they were fairly taken in the net they had prepared for others, and expected nothing but death. The preparations of the twins were quickly and coolly made. They bent down a young hickory, near at hand, and cut from its long, pliant shoots about a dozen long rods, which they proceeded to trim before the eyes of their enemies. The savages read their fate in these preparations. They were to be flogged—the most degrading punishment that could be devised; death was to be preferred.

"See here," said Hau-do. "No flog! Kill, if must—no care; but no flog!"

The young men continued quietly preparing for the punishment. Hau-do repeated the request.

"It is no use," said Alph. "You are in the pay of the king, and but for that we should have shot you at once. We give you the same punishment you would receive at the forts for a like misdemeanor. Be content that we do not take your lives."

"See," said Hau-do; "I am only an Indian, but, in all my life, I never was struck a blow. Do not strike me now."

"It must be done," replied Alph, calmly, but firmly. "Cease to plead."

The savage said no more, but set his lips firmly to bear the trial he knew must come. He did not shrink from the pain. No; the young chief would have shouted his death-song in the midst of a fire; but the idea of blows upon his bare skin appalled him. The punishment in itself was light compared with the crime for which it was the atonement. He had intended to murder the brothers; had followed them for that purpose, but had looked for death, if taken, not disgrace.

"Are you ready, Ben?" said Alph, grasping a rod.

"Ready," was the reply.

"Give it to him, then. Forty, save one."

The rods whistled through the air, and lighted upon the naked shoulders of the bound men. Not a shiver, not a cry, spoke the agony they endured, as the fierce strokes came down. Only the eyes of each burned with a frightful malignity, which told of the fire boiling in their hearts. The twins had made enemies who would be faithful unto death.

The punishment was over; and, leaving them bound to the saplings, the young men proceeded to break the locks of their rifles, and threw their knives into the river. This done, they pulled the hunting-shirts over the scarred shoulders, and untied them, with the admonition that, if they crossed their paths again, they would shoot them down like dogs.

The Indians answered never a word. Only the eyes still blazed like hidden fires.

"You will remember this," said Alph.

"Member it? Yes!"

The concentrated bitterness of his tone cannot be expressed.

"Go!" said Ben.

Without another word, the warriors turned aside, and left the beaten path which the young scouts must pursue.

"We have made enemies," said Alph.

"We could do no less," replied Ben. "The fellows would have murdered us. Come on; we have wasted too much time upon them, and shall have to borrow some hours from the night."

"Yes, indeed; for we must go thirty miles to-day, in some way. It might have been as well had we stuck to the canoe."

"Perhaps so; if the river were not so full of rapids. We have to carry the canoe so much of the way after we reach the Cohoes."

The young scouts hurried their steps, and at night, when they could no longer see the path, camped by the side of a little stream, which ultimately found its way into one of the tributaries of the Mohawk. As they were in the midst of the Indian country, they did not light a fire, but satisfied their hunger with some jerked venison, which they carried in their pouches. This done, Ben lay down to rest, and dreamed of Flora, while his brother, taking his rifle in his hand, stood guard.

The hours stole silently on. Nothing was heard save the flap of the night-bird's wing, or the cry of the loon upon the distant river. The low wind, sighing through the pine branches, had to Alph a pleasant sound. He had lived long in the woods, and knew its ways. To most readers, the situation would seem anything but pleasant; but, to him, night in the woods was glorious.

His thoughts reverted suddenly to Flora. What if the savages whom they had beaten should return to do her harm? He knew that they were powerless for the present; but he knew, also, that an Indian, intent on mischief, would not be long in finding friends in the forest.

He looked down at the brother, sleeping so calmly at his feet, and his heart was full of tenderness for him. The love of these two was more than brotherly, "passing the love of women." Perils shared bind men to each other, and they had faced death together often; so, they were true brothers.

What would he do, if the girl he loved suffered wrong at the hands of the red fiends who had left them? He knew their natures, and that, fertile in invention, they would be very apt to strike at them through Flora.

Would this be their first movement, when they found help? He could not tell. Perhaps they would follow on his trail, hoping to do them some harm; he rather hoped that they would, than that they should return to the Mohawk.

He was aroused from his reverie by hearing a stealthy, crawling sound—a rustling among the dry leaves of the forest. It was very dark in the spot where they had made their camp, and, although Alph peered carefully out into the darkness, he could see nothing. The sounds ceased, and he had almost persuaded himself that it was nothing but the wind, when it began again. Some animal, whose foot fell lightly, was mak-

ing the circuit of the camp. Vainly his eyes sought to penetrate the darkness. The noise ceased again, and Alph could see two balls of fire gleaming out upon him, as the light of a fat-pine torch, with which he had provided himself, flashed up in the gloom.

The lights disappeared, as the torch was lighted, and a second after he could hear a sound, as if a body had struck the earth some distance away. There was no difficulty now. No beast of our American forest can move with such lightning rapidity, except one; and that one, the American panther.

He waited.

The crawling noise was repeated, and the gleaming balls, which were the eyes of the panther, once more came in view. Alph raised his rifle, and lowered it again, with a hesitating motion. To gain time, he lighted another brand, and flung it at the beast. He disappeared with a short cry of rage and fear.

"Fight the devil with fire," muttered Alph. "I don't like to shoot, for I fear the Indians are on our track. Ben?"

His brother awoke with a start.

"Confound it; I have been dreaming, I guess. I thought I heard a scream!"

"You did; the scream of a panther."

"Where?"

"Wait a moment, and you can see his eyes. There!"

The flaming balls were in sight again, moving restlessly to and fro.

"What do you think we had better do, Ben?"

"Let him have it; if he leaps, I will give him mine."

"But I think we are followed."

"What, by our friends without guns? Precious little harm they can do us. Take him now."

"Wait. As soon as you are sure that the beast is dead, take my hand and let us run; for I am certain that the savages are coming up."

"What makes you think so?"

"I have heard calls given and answered, and all from one part of the woods. Depend upon it, they are upon our trail."

"You know best, Alph. Put on your pouch, while I watch the painter. He is getting excited, and may make up his mind to leap upon us."

Alph complied with the request, and then lifted his rifle and waited for a chance. At last the eyes became stationary for a moment, and then the rifle sent out a leaden messenger. An angry yell told that it had reached its mark, and a huge ball shot out into the air, and struck the ground at the feet of Alph. His brother raised his rifle, but the voice of the other restrained him.

"Stay," said he. "It was a sure shot. The beast is dead. Hold down the torch."

The bullet had entered between the eyes of the panther and passed completely through the head.

"A good shot in the dark," said Ben. "Come on."

They joined hands and ran on for a mile.

"This will do," said Alph. "Let us stop."

For some moments they waited in silence, and then, from the vicinity of their abandoned camp, a series of angry yells told that the scout was right. The savages already knew that their prey had flown.

"Push on," said Ben.

It was seldom that the brothers were so hard pressed as to travel in the night, but upon this occasion they hurried on until the morning became gray in the east. Then they sat down, and partook of a hurried repast.

It is needless to follow these adventurous men in their course to the upper waters of the Hudson. They had gained so much upon their enemies by their night travel, that they were not able to come up with them. The fifth day out found them near the army of Dieskau, then camped a few miles from Crown Point, perfecting a plan for his attack upon the English posts. He had a large army, composed, however, for the most part, of Canadians and Indians. The latter were nearly all of the great Huron or Wyandot nation, which remained faithful to the French, even as the Six Nations were to the English. The French commanders found them of great use in their battles. Too often they were not able to restrain their savage allies, though this could not be laid to the charge of Dieskau.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FRENCH CAMP.

As a military nation, France has had no equal. The people have all acquired a taste for military glory, which makes them able soldiers, and this was shown in the management of Dieskau's camp. In the center stood the tents of the French regulars, tastefully laid out in squares. In the center of these, above a large marquee, floated the great banner, bearing the lilies of France, designating the tent of the baron. Through the intervals between the tents guards paced to and fro, having the erect bearing of the trained soldier, saluting their officers as they passed with military precision.

Two young officers were conversing in one of the squares, talking with the volubility peculiar to the Frenchman.

"What think you are the baron's plans, Ernest?" said one, in the gay uniform of an aide-de-camp.

"How can I tell? The baron is close-mouthed about these things, I tell you. I think, though, from what I have heard him say, that he means to attack Fort Edward."

"Of what use will it be to us when we take it?"

"What do you mean?"

"Just what I say. When we have taken these forts in the woods, of what use are they to us?"

"Zounds, man, you are crazy! After we have taken these forts and Oswego, we have a perfect chain of posts to the very mouth of the great river. We have confined the English to that strip of country to the east of the mountains; we have all the trade of the West; and, in time, we shall sweep the English into the sea."

"Umph," muttered the other. "Very well to talk, but still I doubt the feasibility of the scheme. These confounded Iroquois are in our way more than the petty posts at Oswego and Edward. Once get *them* in our interests, and our work will be easy. Then it will do to talk of sweeping the English into the sea."

"You oppose your opinion to that of the baron."

"Did you ever hear the baron express an opinion upon the subject?"

"No."

"The baron is a soldier of France. His emperor says, 'Go,' and he goes. He would not be a true soldier if he did not; but he never said what he thought of the plan."

"For all that, I think he likes it."

"No, my word for it, he does not. We are harassed by the scouts of the English. We have no such force as the English think; and, taking all together, our attempt is hopeless."

"Why?"

"You will see to-night, in the council."

"Do you know anything?"

"Nothing that I will tell."

"You are one of the council?"

"Yes. All the officers will be present. Dieskau does not disdain to take counsel from us, even though we are young. Ah, if Braddock had listened to subordinate officers, Fort Du Quesne might not have been ours to-day."

"How know you that?"

"Some prisoners we took spoke of it, and our men know and fear the young colonel who wanted to take the advance, one Washington by name—a brave man, and one who knows how to fight Indians."

"Ah, indeed!"

"It is so. If this expedition comes to grief, it will be because we have so many Canadians and Indians with us. Let us go."

The young officers rose, and passed into the tent.

At night there was a meeting of the officers of the French forces. The expedition had been hastily planned by Dieskau, who had heard that but a small force was stationed at Fort Edward, and with French contempt for anything English, he had hastily left Crown Point, with an army of twelve hundred Canadians and Indians, and only two hundred regulars. These numbers had been magnified by the Indian scouts of the English into a great army, which was feared accordingly. In the mean time the English had been gathering a force, with the intention of invading the French provinces, far exceeding the command of Dieskau. As he neared the fort, the council above referred to was in session.

"We have met," said the brave old baron, as the officers found seats about the tent, "to form some definite plan for our campaign. Any blow we strike must be short, sharp and decisive, or it will be of no avail. We know that the English have a greater force than we, but are sure that the garrison of this new fort upon the Hudson is very small. In my opinion, we can take it."

At this moment the chiefs of the Hurons entered, and took seats. The baron repeated his statement for their benefit. The head chief signified a desire to speak.

"Let the chief rise," said Dieskau.

A brawny savage stood up, and stretched out his hand in an unstudied and graceful attitude.

"Let not my father be angry at the chief's words. The Hurons are the friends of the French. Many have died upon the war-path, striking good blows for my father. They are

willing to fight still, but they are only men. The Hurons fight with bows and arrows. Since their fathers have come among them, they have learned to take a rifle in their hands. They can fight well with these. But my young men come to me and say, we will not go up to the strong places of the English. Their big thunder fills our hearts with dread. A runner has come in to say that the great wigwam on the river is very strong. The walls are piled up to reach the tree-tops, and the big thunder is upon it. Our young men heard this, and they were afraid. They could not go on while such things faced them!"

"Are my brothers cowards?" said the old baron, testily.

"The Hurons are very brave," replied the chief, smiting his breast, "but they fear the big thunder of the English. Let my father hear the words of our mouths. Other runners have come in, and they bring us great news. The army of the English is not far away, and they have left the big guns behind them. They could not draw them through the woods. We do not fear to fight with them. Let us go up against them."

The baron looked around the circle of grim chiefs, and read in their faces an unconquerable determination. Their fear of the cannon of the English had forced them to this determination, and they were willing to meet the superior forces of Johnson rather than the cannon at the fort.

While they deliberated, an orderly came in with a paper. Dieskau spoke to his officers, after looking it over.

"I hold in my hand," said he, "a statement of our force. We have two hundred and fifteen regulars, five hundred and ten Canadian rangers, and seven hundred Hurons. Of this force we can depend upon only the whites to stand up against cannon. With this statement, shall we proceed to the attack of this fort?"

The question was debated at some length, and it was finally decided to attack Johnson in his camp, as it was believed that he had no cannon. Having come to this conclusion, a body of rangers commenced a road toward Fort Edward, the better to deceive the enemy, and the rest of the army prepared to march in the morning. The council broke up, and all the officers left the marquee. Scarcely had they done so, when the tent-cloth was lifted, and a man in the garb of a hunter, with a huge yellow beard covering the lower part of his face, entered, and possessed himself of some papers, scattered upon the table. This done, he departed as silently as he came.

He appeared to be a privileged character, for he joined a body of soldiers at one of the campfires, laughing in a silly way at everything which was said.

"By Jove!" said Ernest, who happened to be in the group, "it is the same mad fellow who came to Crown Point. I say, old fellow?"

"What say, boy?"

"Boy, indeed! What do you mean by calling me a boy?"

Both spoke in the mongrel dialect of the Canadians, the only one the mad hunter seemed to understand.

"Thought you *was* a boy," said the demented man, with a ghastly grin. "Ain't you?"

"Peste! I am a captain of the guard."

"Oh. Glad you told me. Used to have such a boy to hold my horse when I was a marquis."

"Oh, you were a marquis, then?"

"I have been an emperor," said he, assuming a dignified air.

"Ah. Your pardon, sire. Bow the knee, *mon camarades*, to your lord and master."

All present did obeisance, as if he had been in truth what he claimed.

"Very well. You please me. You are dutiful subjects. You, sir, shall be a baron, when—you know enough, which will not be soon."

Ernest flushed to the roots of his hair.

"A murrain on the old beast. He is more knave than fool."

"Right, right, Ernest. See how well he has learned your character."

"What do you mean by that, sir?" demanded the young captain, striding up to the speaker.

"Nothing whatever, my dear Ernest. You are such a fire-cater that it won't do to jest with you. This man is a fool, after all, and has not rightly judged our young friend. We all agree with you."

There was something provoking in the manner of the speaker.

"Hal what have we here?" cried one of the young men.

A party of Indians had come into the camp. Foremost among them came Hau-do, the young Mohawk who had been so roughly handled by the scouts. He was evidently in a hurry. As he came in sight, the mad hunter disappeared in the gloom among the tents.

"Take me to the war-chief," cried Hau-do.

"He has retired. I do not think you can see him to-night."

"Mus' see him," replied Hau-do.

"Have you important information?"

"Yes; go quick; tell him mus' see him now."

One of the officers came up, and after hearing the request of the Indian, went to the baron's tent. He found it in confusion, and his commander angrily directing a search for the missing documents.

"What have you lost?"

"Lost, sir!—everything. My army, my honor, if those papers find their way into the hands of General Johnson. Join us in the search."

"What los', eh?" demanded Hau-do.

"Papers of value."

"Talking papers, eh?"

"Yes."

"Know who take them."

"Who?" cried the baron, turning suddenly upon him.

"Alph."

"Who is he?"

"Alph Armitage. Got a brudder Ben. Jus' as bad as he. He take dem."

"An English scout?"

"Yes."

"How do you know he is in the camp?"

"Know he come to scout; t'ink he come in camp. Seen any man in camp?"

"The mad hunter—yes; but he is a Frenchman."

"No he ain't. Dat's Alph."

"Do you mean to tell me that he is a spy?"

"Course I do."

"Order a search, Captain De Sayle. Be in haste. Have you seen this fellow to-night, any of you?"

"Yes, sire, said the officer who had conducted Hau-do to the tent. "I saw him just as this Indian came up, talking with some of our men at a fire. He speaks the Canadian *patois* perfectly, whatever he may be."

"Where did he go?"

"I did not notice, sire. I was occupied with the Indian."

"Who are you?" said the baron, turning to the renegade.

"Hau-do! Mohawk chief. Scout for English. Use Hau-do bad. Come to French fader; work for him."

"Then you wish to desert the English cause?"

"Yes."

"If your information, brought to-night, is true you have given us good reasons to think you indeed desire to serve us faithfully. Captain, see that the fellow is brought to my presence directly after he is taken."

"I will do so, sire," said the captain, leaving the tent.

"How did you know that this spy was coming here?"

"Follow him from Mohawk country. Try to kill him, but him catch me—whip Indian. Ah, dog!"

The savage ground his teeth at the remembrance.

A great tumult arose outside, and a number of soldiers came into the tent, dragging along the mad hunter. He was pouring out upon them a perfect volley of French interjections, which ceased the moment his eye rested upon Hau-do. His form straightened up proudly, and his eyes looked upon the traitor with a fiery glance of contempt.

"Take off his beard," said the baron.

One of the soldiers removed the mass of shaggy hair from the face of the prisoner, and the handsome countenance of Alph Armitage was revealed. The malignant face of Hau-do was full of joy. He knew the fate of men caught in disguise in the camp of the enemy.

"Monsieur," said the baron, bowing with stately grace, "I have the honor to wish you a very good-evening. May I ask your business?"

"Ask that of these men who insisted upon my company although I had a positive engagement in an opposite direction."

"Ah, indeed! What barbarians! I can scarcely credit that my men should be guilty of so impolite an action."

"But they have, though."

"It is thought, monsieur, that you have made free with certain articles belonging to me. Now, I should be happy to give you any thing in reason, but, really—"

"You wish them yourself. It is a pleasure to do anything for a gentleman. I return them to you, since they can be of no further use to me."

Hau-do approached him, and hissed his vindictive fury forth in words:

"Dog of an Englishman, what did you look

for when you struck a chief like a hound? Did you think the flesh of an Indian like that of a red-coat? Only your blood shall wash away this stain. You will die, and I shall look upon it. I shall hear you groan, and your brother shall know that you are dead."

"Take him out of my sight," said Alph, angrily, "or I shall kill him where he stands."

"Go away, Hau-do," said Dieskau. "Do not harass a prisoner in this way."

During this colloquy, Alph had been standing but a few feet from the tent door. There was no hope of escape, but he wished to communicate his misfortune to Ben, who awaited his return not far off. Making a sudden spring, he was in an instant outside the door of the tent, when he lifted his hands to his lips, and uttered a sharp, shrill cry. The soldiers seized him, and dragged him back into the tent.

"Was that a signal?" demanded the baron.

"Yes, sire, that was undoubtedly a signal."

"And to whom?"

"I decline to answer."

"It is needless. I shall find out who it is. Order the Indians into the woods, Captain De Sayle, and tell them to bring whoever they find into my presence at once."

"If you find him," said the scout, with a chuckle. "As he is expecting you he will probably not wait."

"Take him to the guard-tent," said the baron, "and watch him well. We shall see about this. Of what material do the English think us? Young man, you are over bold."

"It don't matter," said Alph. "I have done my duty."

After he was gone, Dieskau called Hau-do, and sent him on an embassy. Knowing that he had come out as a spy for the English, and that they did not know of his disaffection, he was able to form his plan, which succeeded admirably.

Hau-do found General Johnson in his tent, surrounded by his able officers. Conspicuous among them was General Lyman, who was unusually beloved by his soldiers; Colonel Ephraim Williams, of Massachusetts, than whom a braver man never drew the sword; Hendrick, the famous Mohawk chief, who had led his warriors to the aid of the English; while, lower in grade, and thus early showing the qualities which made them famous in after times, were Israel Putnam and John Stark, who fought under the flag of England, one as captain, the other as a lieutenant.

The renegade was admitted at once. They had no idea of his turning traitor, so soon after he had returned to them.

"Ah, Hau-do," said Johnson, eagerly, "I am glad to see you. What news from the French?"

"Hau-do has been upon their trail," replied the young chief. "He has learned the plans of the French."

"Well, well, sir, your news; do not keep us waiting."

"They are cutting roads through to Edward."

"Have they a large army?"

"Can you count the leaves of the forest? Can you number the pigeons as they fly? If you can, you can count the warriors of the French."

"Umph; do not make it too large, Hau-do, or

we shall not know how much to believe. You say that the French are cutting roads toward Edward?"

"Yes."

"And in large force?"

"Yes."

"Have they any French soldiers?"

"Many."

"Colonel Williams, what do you think had best be done?"

"It looks, sir, as if Edward were in danger. If such is the case, we must send men to its relief."

"Will you lead men to its defense?"

"Willingly, sir, only I would not take from General Lyman what seems his by right."

"General Lyman will doubtless waive his claim, as I desire him to stay with me. Call out a detachment of twelve hundred men, and march to the relief of Edward. Take Hendrick with you, and a few of his warriors, as you may need them. Be circumspect in your movements."

"I will give a good account of them if they meet me. Shall I have Hau-do as a guide?"

"He may go with you."

A gleam of savage joy came into the eyes of the Indian. He was about to make his revenge perfect. The deception of Johnson was complete.

Williams was not long in making his preparations, and was soon marching gayly out to the relief of Edward, with a thousand men, and two hundred Mohawks, at whose head stalked the fearless chief, Hendrick, his wampum and feathers making him a mark for the bullets of the enemy.

Hau-do guided them straight into the trap Dieskau had prepared for them. No place seemed better fitted as a slaughter-pen for brave men. On one side, a thick forest, interspersed with rocks, furnished shelter for a part of the enemy. Upon the other, a dark and almost impenetrable swamp concealed nearly all the rest, while only a few lurked in their front.

Not a shot was fired as the column came into the ambush. Then a leaden hail was poured in upon them, that made the front rank seem to sink into the earth. At the first discharge, Hendrick, the indomitable chief, fell dead in the bloody defile. His men, disheartened, gave way at once. The English pressed on, forcing back the small body in their front, while that withering fire was kept up from every side. Alph, marching in the center of the rear-guard of the French, understood by their conversation that the English were led into a trap, and were being slaughtered like sheep.

"By heavens!" he muttered, "this is another Du Quesne."

"You are right," said a French officer at his elbow. "When will the English cease to run into such traps?"

"We have seen the head chief of the Mohawks fall," said a courier, riding back. "The Hurons say it is Hendrick. He was shot by one of his own tribe, who knew him, and took good aim."

"My God!" murmured Alph, "what a blow to our cause."

Another courier came in.

"Williams is down; they are retreating. Push on, every man we have, and we shall be the victors."

Alph struggled with his bonds. If he could have freed his hands, he would have attempted escape, surrounded as he was by his guards. But his efforts were in vain.

"You waste your strength, young man," said the officer in charge. "Be quiet."

In the mean time the victorious column of the French was pushing on, the regulars cheering, and the mad yells of the Canadians and Indians pealing out upon the air. Johnson heard them, and he knew what it meant. Williams was beaten, and was retreating, that was very plain. There was little time to lose, and the axmen were set hastily to work felling trees to form a breastwork. Drum and trumpet, unaccustomed sounds, rung out upon the clear September morning. Companies and regiments hurried to and fro, seeking the station assigned them. The master hand of the gallant Lyman soon placed the mass in order, and they were ready for the assault.

A few cannon, received that very day from Edward, were placed in position upon the rude breastworks. Soon the fugitives came in sight, beaten and disheartened, and swept through the English lines into the camp. Scarcely had they passed by the guns, and reached a position in the center of the works, when the excited force of the French and Indians came in sight, hotly pressing the pursuit.

Then the thunder of the cannon woke the echoes of the forest, and the Indians, awed by the unwelcome sound, and frightened by the missiles which came plunging through the woods, cutting down branches of the trees, and plowing up the ground on every side, fell slowly back to the edge of the woods, from which they did not advance during the fight, but kept up an ineffectual fire at long range.

The regulars, who knew no such word as retreat, unmindful of the fact that they were left alone to battle against fearful odds, stood up to the work, exposing their breasts to the fire of the enemy's cannon, with a determined bravery that won respect even from enemies. And when the brave two hundred had nearly all fallen, after five hours' desperate battle, the French began to retreat. Then the English left their breastworks, and in turn became the pursuers.

Dieskau had been twice wounded, but the brave man never left his post. His soldiers, who loved him as a father, attempted to carry him from the field. While doing this, one of his bearers was struck down by a ball, and the baron begged the other to fly, as he could be of no use to him. Through the remainder of the fight, he sat upon the stump of a tree, while the bullets flew thick about him, and waited for the end. It is said, but the story is not fully vouched for, that while in this position, the brave commander was seen and fired on by an English soldier, while feeling for his watch, the other supposing him to be in search of a pistol. Be that as it may, he was taken prisoner, and died in the hands of the English.

Early in the fight General Johnson was slightly wounded, and retired to a safe position, when the command devolved upon General Lyman. The work was left in good hands, and the victory, after all, was his. There are those who

say that the actions of Johnson, in regard to Lyman, were ungenerous in the extreme, and that he was never mentioned in the dispatches.

General Johnson himself was knighted for this victory, and was known in colonial history as Sir William Johnson, and showed himself a cool, wary and subtle man, whom the Indians loved. To him, more than any other, the friendship of the Six Nations to the English is due.

In the retreat, the French carried back their prisoner. From time to time he tried to escape, but the eyes of his captors were upon him, with a fierce determination that he should not elude them. The regular officers were gone, and he was in the hands of the partisan leaders, more cruel, if such a thing could be, than the savages themselves. They determined to be revenged upon him.

At night they camped near a small lake, or pond, in the forest. A mock trial was given to Alph, and he was condemned to die. He was asked to stand up and speak for himself, as he had but a few moments to live.

He rose slowly.

"You ask me to say what I have to say, and then prepare to die. It is a hard thing for one so young to die, and I am but mortal. Yet I do not repine at my fate. One thing only irks me, and that is, that I did not kill that red renegade, Hau-do, when I had him in my power. What is it to me, the manner in which I die? I have served my country faithfully, and die in her service. I leave a brother, who will avenge me, and do much harm yet to the villains who murder me. If you have hearts, let him know how I die. That is all I have to say."

As he finished, a light, active form burst through the circle around him, and in an instant cut his bonds from his arms, placing a hatchet in his hand. The Canadians started back, amazed. They had never seen the two brothers together, and the strange similarity appalled them. Before they had recovered from their surprise, the twin scouts had disappeared in the woods.

All this had passed like a lightning-flash, and nothing was left where Alph had stood but the severed bonds, and the ghastly body of a man who had tried to stay them in their course and had been cloven down by Ben, with a single blow. An angry roar in the camp had scarcely begun, when out of the surrounding woods a regiment dashed upon them. A force of New Hampshire boys, coming up from Edward, had been led by Ben to the spot where the enemy were camped. The surprise was complete, and the rout total. Without an effort at fighting, they broke, and scattered through the woods, pursued by the stalwart provincials, with yells of triumph.

The battle was over, and the next day was spent in burying the dead, and laying the foundation of a new wooden fort, upon the ground where the battle was fought. The brothers did not care to stay for such work, and the general was willing to let them go for a while. Next day they started on their return to the Mohawk country, to keep their appointment with Middleton.

They traveled slowly, as they had no idea of danger for the Middletons. It is a long march

from Fort William Henry to the Cohoes, and they were in no hurry. There was much for the brothers to say to each other, since one had been so near death, and many hours were spent idling upon sunny slopes, and telling what they had done while separated. Ben had hung about the French army, night and day, after he heard the signal from his brother, telling him that he was taken, and had used every artifice to get into the camp. But the Indians were on the alert and it was impossible to approach without being seen. The opportunity at the pond was too good to be lost, and he had rescued him, though at great peril to himself.

They had plans, too, to arrange for the safety of the Middletons. The campaign was now fully opened, and they knew the French would not rest until they had wiped out the stain of their defeat in some manner. The country, in the mean time, would be full of hostile Indians, and no frontiersman would be at all safe. They concluded that it was best for the family to remove to Albany, until the storm had passed over, and then return to their farm. They had just arrived at this conclusion, when they came out of the woods, into the clearing surrounding Middleton's dwelling.

The beautiful plantation was a scene of the most appalling desolation. House, negro-quarters, barns, everything combustible, had been swept by the fire-demon. A smoke rose slowly from the still-smoldering ruins. The brothers rushed eagerly into the opening. As they passed along, they saw the marks of many moccasin-ed feet upon the earth, and knew that this was the work of the Indians.

"My God!" cried Ben, striking his forehead with his clinched hand, "they are gone."

They made the circuit of the dwelling. All was chaos and confusion. Charred doors, battered casements, threshold half-consumed, told a sad tale; and, a little away from the house, drops of blood, and a great, dark stain upon the green grass, told that perhaps here some soul had yielded up the ghost.

Who had done this? Indians, they were sure. From what source had they come, and whither had they fled, their fell work being accomplished? They had but one thought, and that was to follow and avenge the fallen. Who had died? Was the brave and chivalrous Middleton no more? Had Flora ceased to live? They asked themselves the question, but the smoking ruins gave them no reply.

All at once, the ruins above the cellar began to heave and tremble. The brothers leaped toward the spot. Charred rafters flew aside, fallen bricks were displaced, and a round black head and ponderous shoulders were thrust up through the rubbish. It was the giant negro, Big Sam.

"Help here!" he cried.

They set to work, and aided him to come out of the hole. His hands were tightly bound; his face scarred with knife-cuts. He had not been a coward.

They sat down, and at the request of the brothers, he told the story of the assault.

CHAPTER V.

BIG SAM'S STORY.

"'TAIN'T like I kin tell it jist as ye w'u'd hab

it, boys. I nebber c'u'd tell it so. It am just de wast an' wickedest piece ob business de worl' ebber knew. You went away, an' de master had we work on de ole place, an' put planks 'fore de winders, an' strengthen de doors. We work hard, for some ob de boys had sense 'nuff to know all dis wan't fur nottin'. Dey 'fraid of de Injins, dey was, an' poor fellers, dey had cause.

"Miss Flora, she were round most ob de time, an' she look so pooty, an' we all lub her so, dat work seem easy, 'cause it was done fer her. 'Pears like dat chile is an angel. 'Pears like I can't b'ar it.

"We got all fixed after a while, an' we was all satisfied dat de Injins might come on; dat dey couldn't hurt we at all. 'Pears like we poor humans don't know notting about dese t'ings, fer all our work jist went fer notting, as you see.

"'Bout a week ago, one ob de boys who was out in de woods came runnin' in, an' sed dat de Injins was a-comin'. So we all put into de big house, an' drawed de bolts, loaded all de guns, an' was ready for 'em. De boy said dar was a great many; he couldn't count dem, an' I 'spect dar was nigh on to forty myself. We had scurce-ly shut de doah when one kem' up an' wanted to come in. We driv him off, an' tole him not to come up no more. We had a good strong party inside, but de women an' de chillen dey was in de way, so we sent dem all down into de cellar, whar dey'd be kinder safe, like. Wal, dem Injins kem' up an' 'gin to fiah at we. Marse Middleton an' de rest ob us jist fired w'en we c'u'd see a head or a leg, an' dat way we set a-many ob dem a-howlin'."

"But, Sam, I can't bear this!" cried Ben; "is Flora dead?"

"No, chile; not dead. 'Pears like 'twould hab been better ef she was dead, an' lyin' at your foot, dan whar she am. De Injins hab her; dat's a fac'."

"And Middleton?"

"Dead, de good master. Dey kill him right 'fore her eyes."

"My God! you don't mean it!"

"Dat's so. Wish I was lyin'. Wish you c'u'd hit me right in de mouf, an' say, 'Sam, you old fool, you's a-lyin', you is.' I wouldn't hit you back."

"No, no; it must be true. Go on."

"We kept dem off easy 'nuff while de day lasted. Dey was 'fraid of us, for we hit some ob dem dat was kitin' roun' loose in de bushes.

"Bimeby one ob dem cum an' se'd 'twan't no use fer us to fight—might as well gib up, an' we should hab good treatment. He wa'n't nebber an Injin, dat feller, but a bad French Canada man. We wouldn't hear to a word he said, an' he went away mad, an' said dat we w'u'd make it de wuss for our own selves, for dat he w'u'dn't help us if dey burned us to def. We felt right safe, an' larfed at him. We oughtn't 'a' done dat, fer it med' dem mad, an' dey swore dat dey w'u'd mek' we suffer.

"Night kem', an' de boys were sleepy. Five of us kep' watch, an' de udder five slept. Late at night, we h'ard some one at de winder. We went dar to listen. One Injin war dar, an' I was gwine to shoot him, w'en he looked up and spoke your name, Marse Ben. Den I saw he had some-ting in his hand. He spoke English, an' said

you had sent him. 'Twas dat feller dat came here de udder day w'en you here—de oldest one, I mean. I tuk what he had in his hand troo de winder, an' w'en Miss Flora saw dat she said you sent it, for you w'u'd keep dat to de las'. 'Twas her pictur', Marse Ben."

Ben thrust his hand into his pocket in search of his treasure. I was gone, indeed. He had not thought of it in the excitement of the two weeks past, as he had a smaller one, which he carried more carelessly. He knew that he must have lost it on the way, perhaps in the struggle with the Indians whom they flogged, perhaps in his camp. Certain it was that he lost it and his enemy found it.

"Loss it?"

"Yes; but I don't remember where."

"Nebber min'. He brought dat, an' I didn't shoot him. De good Lord forgib me 'cause I didn't shoot him. Ef I had—ef I only had?"

"What then?"

"Den I w'u'dn't hab dis sad story to tell. Dat Injin betrayed we. Wal, we let him in troo de winder, an' de Injins outside raised a great rowdy, an' jumped roun' an' fired da'r muskets an' made circuses of da'rselves generally, as ef dey was awful mad 'cause he got in. Wal, he telled us a yarn about you two, how you was out dar wid a lot ob men, an' w'u'd mek' dem Injins hop. Den we t'ought we was safe, an' all ob us lay down to sleep 'cept de Injin an' me. I kinder dozed, too, fer the Injin kep' quiet. Dat feller, dey called 'im An-ga-wam, told me you wouldn't 'ta'k de Injins till mornin', 'cause you didn't want him to git 'way at all. Den I sent 'im down sta'rs to watch, while I kep' above. I might 'a' known 'twan't in de Injin natur' to keep so quiet, 'less dar was some debbletry in de wind; but I didn't t'ink, an' dat An-ga-wam went down to watch.

"I kinder dozed up above dar, an' maybe an hour went on, an' I heard steps like a cat down sta'rs. I jest looked down, t'inking it was An-ga-wam, comin' up, an' de Lord! all de room was full ob Injins, an' more comin' in at de doah. I fired my gun at dem, an' jest jumped down dar an' tried to hustle dem all out. Marse Middleton tried to git up, an' one ob dem killed 'im wid a hatchet, jist as Miss Flora cum' up from de cellar. She jist laid down on her fader's dead body, wid her face as w'ite as paper. Dey had me down by dis time, but I guess some ob dem laid down to rest fu'st; got tired, mebbe. I know I had a hatchet in each hand, an' I guess as how some ob dem got hurt."

The giant stretched out his brawny arms, and the strong muscles stood out like cordage.

"I didn't mind da'r knives, an' dey saw it, so dey jist piled on me altogedder, an' dat carried me to de floor. Den dey tied me, an' 'gin to carry out de truck I had lef' on de floor 'fore I went down. Dey didn't tie me strong 'nuff, an' I got clear, an' laid out free more ob dem, 'fore dey could git me down ag'in. Dat made dem awful mad, an' dey w'u'd hab killed me, but An-ga-wam kep' dem off me, an' said somet'ing to dem in Injin. Don' know w'at he said, but it pleased dem mighty, an' dey carried out de dead, an' buried it somewhar; I ain't been out to see. Five ob de boys dey killed, an' de udder t'ree dey kep' wid dem. After dey had buried

all de rest, dey took up my poor Marse Middleton, an' carried him out. Miss Flora followed him, an' dey buried him out dar under de maple. I c'u'd see it troo de door.

"Den dey kem' back, an' took out all dat dey wanted in de house. Dey carried me out, too, for a while, an' talked 'bout me a long time, an' den dey took me back, an' laid me on de floor, went out, locked de doah, an' lef' me.

"Pears like dey t'ought I had killed too many of da'r men dat day, to let me off too easy, so dey lef' me in dar an' set fire to de house. T'ink ob dat; de debbils was gwine to burn me dat way. I didn't like dat much, an' when de fire got too warm, an' I knew dey c'u'dn't come near an' see what I was doin', I jist rolled to de cellar sta'rs, an' tumbled down. Like to broke my neck, dat time, but I didn't hab no time to fool roun', an' I struck de floor kerchunk. Wal, de fire ro'red roun', an' med' a great fuss ginerally, an' it was a little warm down dar, min' you. I usen to stand up by dem little winders, an' suck in de sweet air from outside, like good wine. Dey fooled roun' a long time, an' den set fire to de udder houses, an' put out, takin' all dat was left wid dem. Now, den, w'at you gwine to do?"

"Which way did they go?"

"Dey took de paf to de norf. Spec' dey's gone to de Huron country."

"We must find the trail and follow them if the road they have taken leads them to Quebec. Better for the poor girl if it does," said Alph.

"We have not a moment to waste," said Ben, rising with a hard, stern look upon his face. "Let us get upon their trail without any delay. How many days are they ahead of us, Sam?"

"Four," replied the giant, sententiously.

"Very good: we must travel all the faster for that. Do you think, Alph, that we shall come up to them before they get to the Huron country?"

"No," replied Alph.

"Perhaps it is as well. Whatever we do, we must do quickly, but in this case I think that we can accomplish more after they have her safe in their village than upon the trail."

"You are right, Ben. We shall do better so. Do you think, boy, that we could fight the gang?"

"We are going to take her away from them, come what will."

"Just so; now you love the girl, and would lose your life to save hers. Very well; I do not love her as you do, but I would dare as much for her, and I am cool, while you are not yourself, being in love. Before we start, say that you will obey my orders in all things, until the girl is safe in our hands."

"I will do so," said Ben.

"Me too!" said Sam.

"You go with us, then, Sam?"

"Course I do; don't s'pose you c'u'd keep me back, does you? Lor', feel as ef I c'u'd take a hull tribe of Injuns, an' frow 'em into de lakel!"

"You must obey me in everything. Be careful where you step in the wood; make no noise."

"I's good at deer-stalking, Marse Alph."

"So you are. Then be as careful as if you were coming up to a stag, and were almost within shot."

"Dat's it!"

"Now lead us to the place where they entered the woods."

The black took the advance, and the brothers, slinging their rifles across their shoulders, advanced briskly to the edge of the woods. Here the road was beaten down by many hoofs and moccasin-tracks. The Indians had evidently stolen every horse upon the place.

"They don't mean to force her to walk," quoth Ben. "That is one comfort."

"Better still, we shall be able to follow the trail easily. Which horse did she ride, Sam?"

"Her horse, Abdallah," replied the giant.

"Here is his footmark. There is no mistaking that. Light and dainty as the foot of his mistress. We shall be able to follow that with ease. Come on."

The march was begun. Up the long slopes of the Adirondacks, by the margin of the classic lakes embosomed among the hills, the rescue-party followed the Indians. With unswerving fidelity, the giant negro strode on in the footsteps of the young scouts, uncomplaining, tireless as they were. The Indians traveled rapidly, as the pursuers knew by the fact that the trail freshened but little as they proceeded.

"They will reach the village long before us," said Ben, as they paused for rest one night under the drooping branches of a pine forest, by the side of a shining lake, visited by tourists every year, since the Adirondacks have become a place of summer resort.

The negro had thrown a line into the water, and was watching its limpid depths intently, not in admiration of its beauty, but with the interest of a hungry man in search of his supper. The eyes of Alph were noting his proceedings, as he answered his brother in the cautious undertone which fishermen naturally assume.

"Certainly. I expect it. All the better for us—ah! you have him, Sam!"

The negro had deposited a four-pound trout upon the bank.

"Dem's 'em, massa. Knowed dat feller w'u'd bite!"

"Throw in again. There are no other such fish, the world over, as the trout of these lakes. I love to sit upon the banks, and pull the shining fellows out."

"Likes to eat dem, too, Marse Alph. Dar's anudder. S'pose you mek' a fiah, and get ready to cook dem, 'gainst I get enough."

Alph complied with the request, and also cleaned and prepared the fish for cooking, as the negro threw them out. Notwithstanding the work they had before them, they ate with a keen enjoyment, which health and exercise only can give. The savory repast ended, Ben and the negro wrapped their blankets about them, and laid down to rest in the shadow of a pine.

When they awoke, it was clear morning, and Alph had caught enough trout for their breakfast, and was watching them as they hissed above the coals.

"Why did you not wake me?" said Ben.

"I wanted you to sleep. There is no danger whatever in this section, and I dozed at intervals through the night. See what I have done."

"I don't like you to do all the work, though."
 "No fear of that. We shall be all the earlier on the trail because I was awake so soon. What have you there, Sam?"

The negro, attracted by something white among the bushes, had gone out upon the trail a little, and now came back holding something in his hand. A small piece of paper, evidently torn from a note-book.

"Don' know, Marso Alph. Look like Miss Flora's writin'."

Ben snatched it from his hands.

"Guff dat back, you. Dat's mine."

Alph smiled, while Ben eagerly read the little scrap, and passed it over to his brother.

"She hoped we would follow them, you see," said Ben. "She had faith in us."

"She tells us that she is safe yet, Sam," said Alph, looking at the giant, "and that there are forty men in the party. That is less than you could handle, Sam."

"Yes, so 'tis," replied Sam, with a grin. "But w'at's de use ob wastin' yer strength when dar's no 'casion fur it. I kin lick a heap ef dey'll only fight fa'r. But dey pile on a feller all to one't. W'at's dat?"

The young men had paused suddenly, evidently at fault.

"The trail is lost," said Ben.

"Gorry, dat's bad. Whar dey gone, t'ink?"

"We will find out directly. It is evident that they begin to suspect that some one may follow them, and have taken measures to cover their trail. I don't see how, though."

"Where do you lose the trail?" said Alph.

"On the shore," replied Ben.

"Look in the water," said Alph.

"You have hit it, by Jove. You could not have found a nicer place for that trick. See, it shoals gradually, and they have ridden in the water about three feet from the shore. Go on to the end of the shingle, Sam, and see if you do not find the tracks again. We will wait here."

The giant went off on a run, and in a few moments his hoarse voice called to the brothers to come on. They hastened their steps, and again found the tracks of men and horses thick upon the sand.

From this to the end, artifice after artifice was used to delude the pursuers. But they, patient and untiring in their efforts, never despaired of their ultimate success, but worked out each problem in woodcraft with persevering zeal. Slowly but surely they kept on their course, and the tenth day found them approaching the Huron village toward which the trail tended.

Here they paused, and arranged a plan for the proposed rescue.

CHAPTER VI. CAPTIVITY.

FLORA had been stunned by the shock of her father's death, and submitted, like one in a trance, to be led away by the murderers. The long-continued march was nothing to her. She took few measures to aid pursuit, until they had nearly reached the end of the journey. She was mounted on her favorite horse, and on either side rode a savage.

They were four horsemen. The Indian of the

East was not the Indian of our western plains. There, upon the backs of untamed mustangs, they emulated the feats of the Arabs, in their daring and splendid horsemanship. But the Hurons sat but awkwardly in their saddles. Hence, they did not care to give the girl a chance to try a race, for she sat her horse with the grace of a master, while her hands held the rein with a careless ease. They offered her no indignity, and she submitted quietly to what she could not help, and rode on with them, looking out for every plan to escape. On the margin of the lake she managed to drop the paper which was found by Sam while the Indians were in consultation upon a plan to elude their pursuers. Once, as if by accident, her horse took fright, just after the Indians had been taking unusual care to cover their trail, and dashed into the bushes, where she quickly broke down branches on both sides, while pretending to give all her strength to the management of the animal.

For the first time, An-ga-wam got angry, and thundered out some order to his guards. They seized the bridle of her horse on either side, and dragged her back into the path, while the chief rode on, fingering his tomahawk in a transport of anger.

There were others in the train of captives—several slaves of Middleton's, trudging along on foot. Among these, and a most contumacious and belligerent captive, was Tiny, a son of the giant. He defied the Indians, in anything but choice language, "to come on an' try him a back. Jest to rile him a little, get de dander up, ef dey dared. He'd mount some ob dem, like twenty streaks of lightnin', he would."

The savages grinned, though they could not understand a word of what he said, with the exception of some half-dozen in the band, who could speak a mixed dialect of the French, English and Indian tongues. These translated what they could of the harangue of Tiny, and he rose at once in their estimation.

"No 'fraid, eh?" said a fellow near him. "S'pose me take scalp, eh?"

"Who's afraid! I ain't! Who cares fer you, darn ole Injin. Bu'st yer head in, ef yer dar' to take dese strings off'n me. Tie one band 'hind o' me, an' lick ye wid de udder. Dar' ye to try it? Take my lef' hand, an' lick any two ob you. You's cowards, you is. Yer dassent fight fa'r."

One of the Indians, a little angry at the sweeping assertions of the young negro, lifted his hand and struck him in the mouth. Tiny drew up his shoulders, lowered his head, and plunged it like a forty-pound ball, full into the stomach of the Indian, who was mounted. The fellow doubled up and rolled from his horse, with the most woe-begone expression on his face ever seen upon the countenance of mortal.

"See dar," said Tiny. "Dat are fellow slap me in de mouf; jist see what he's got. Now luff me tell you all in dis 'nection, dat I sarves de same sass to every one dat runs foul ob me. I'll jump down de froat ob de fu'st red nigger dat dar's to 'sult me by any sich contrivances. I ain't usen to it, an' I ain't goin' ter stan' it, so dar."

All the band raised a roar of approbation as the Indian rolled from his saddle. Stung to the quick by the outrage, he leaped up, brandishing a hatchet in his hand.

"Keep off dar, you," shouted Tiny. "Ef I git to ye 'gi'n, you's dead."

The savage rushed at him. Two or three sprung to interpose, but they were too late. Flora gave poor Tiny up for lost, bound as he was; but to her surprise, as the savage came within reach, one of his broad feet was lifted, and planted with prodigious force directly in the spot upon which the head had alighted before. Again the Indian rolled upon the sod, followed by the jeers of the negro, coupled with those of his comrades.

"Tek' him 'way," cried Tiny. "Tek' away de poor *chile*. I kin lick him wid my han's tied 'hind o' me, bof ob 'dem. Shoo! you goose. Wha's for you try to fight wid me? I has to larf, ebery time I tink how he roll ober. Now, see har you," said he, as the savage prepared to attack him again. "I tell you fa'r dat ef you comes at me ag'in, I's goin' to kill you. You ain't my size, but you's fight wid a hatchet, and jist as live kill a feller as not. G'way, you, while times is good, else you's get hurt."

The savage never minded the caution, but advanced carefully upon his enemy, taking great care to be out of the reach of his ponderous heel. He had a wholesome dread of that formidable instrument, and circled round the negro, seeking to dash in, and take him off his guard. Tiny kept turning about, as if upon a pivot, and haranguing the fellow all the time.

"Now, ain't you a pretty objic', Injin? Yer nose!—I nebber did see sich a nose—reach almost up to me, an' I can't reach you wid my heel. Takes mighty good car' you does, to keep yer handsome pusson away from me. Some ob you fellers see fa'r. Ef I had my han's free, I c'd tek' hol' ob yer nose an' pull it—would, too, I bet. Why don't yer pitch in? Don't yer see dat you's a-keepin' de present cump'ny all dis time a-waitin' yer convenience? Hurry up. Ef you's goin' ter do anyt'ing, say so."

During all this time, it might be observed that Tiny, who delighted in a fight more than any Irishman who ever graduated at Donnybrook Fair, was gradually lessening the distance between himself and his enemy; and, just as he flinched, he lowered his head, and dashed at the Indian with a sudden yell, which put him completely off his guard. He struck at him wildly with the tomahawk, but it was knocked from his hand, and the hard head again found rest below the Indian's diaphragm. Tiny did not allow him to rise this time, but, setting his foot upon his chest, he threatened him with instant death if he attempted to get up. The Indian, however, watching his opportunity, suddenly wriggled from under the huge foot of the negro, and springing to his feet, fled beyond his reach, followed by the jeers of his companions.

The march being resumed, the bellicose darky omitted no words which he hoped might exasperate his captors. No harsh epithet, no taunt, which human ingenuity could devise, was left unspoken. At every step he shouted out something which had just occurred to him, as a good thing to "make 'em mad."

It is not in the savage nature to bear all this contumely without getting angry, and when they camped for the night, he attempted to take his revenge. The negroes had been bound to

small trees, and left in this position for the night. This mode of taking his rest was not at all agreeable to Tiny, and he at once commenced working his arms up and down, hoping to free them from their bonds. Proverbially adepts in the art of binding prisoners, the bands of the Huron were very tight, as poor Tiny found after much painful labor.

They were made of strong green withes, from some tree near at hand. His arms were drawn around the body of the tree, and firmly secured in that position at the wrists. Another withe was then passed about his body, and tied behind the tree. Altogether, it was about as tight a hitch as human ingenuity could devise.

But Tiny was of a sanguine temperament, and continued his efforts to free his hands. Moving them as before, they came in contact with a sharp knot upon the body of the tree. Twisting his wrists in a painful manner, he managed to get the withes upon this knot. He worked vigorously, keeping an eye upon the guard, who leaned against a tree a few paces away.

After hard labor, his zeal was rewarded by feeling one of the withes drop from his wrist. Taking courage, he sawed away vigorously, and had the satisfaction of feeling the cords drop off entirely. Catching them before they could fall, and keeping his eye still upon the guard, he waited an opportunity for placing them between his back and the tree, where he could get them, in case the guard's suspicions were aroused. That individual, smoking placidly, never removed his eyes from the person by the tree, having no thought, although so watchful, that the bonds were off his hands.

It was not the intention of the negro to escape. He simply removed the withes in a sort of bravado, to show the savages that he did not care anything about them, and would not wear cords of their tying.

He now turned his attention to the bond about his waist. The knot of this being on the other side of the tree, he was forced to trust to the sense of feeling, and might be drawing the knot tight instead of untying it. But, working with dogged perseverance, he at last touched the clew, and unloosed the knot.

He was now entirely free, and looked stealthily about him. His savage captors lay sleeping, with the exception of the guard over each prisoner. The care of An-ga-wam had furnished Flora with a sort of hut, formed from hemlock boughs, under which she lay sleeping. The chief himself lay stretched across the doorway of this hastily improvised shelter, so that she could not pass out without disturbing him. Tiny's chivalrous admiration of Miss Flo', and his devotion to her interests, would have kept him from escaping without her, and he only studied in what manner he could create the most disturbance in the camp.

While he deliberated, the guard was changed, and to the surprise of Tiny, the fellow whom he had treated so roughly, went upon guard in his place.

The thought never entered Tiny's head that the fellow meant mischief to him, but he watched him, drawing the withe behind him, so that he could not see the ends.

The savage, with the untiring patience of his race, stood quietly at his post for over half an hour, while the negro, who could think of nothing to do, just yet, and who was in no hurry to resume his bonds, eyed him closely.

After a time, the guard peered cautiously about the camp, and saw that all was quiet. Then he took a hatchet from his belt, and looked at Tiny. The negro stared. What could the fellow mean?

He was stealing cautiously toward him, holding the hatchet behind him. In an instant the truth flashed through his brain that the savage meant to murder him, in return for his ill-treatment in the morning.

With admirable presence of mind, he kept his hands behind him, and watched the approach of his enemy. He came close to him, and seeing that his eyes were closed, stopped to look at him before he struck.

"Aha! black man," he hissed; "now me kill you!"

To his surprise, the hand of the negro suddenly darted at him, and seized him by the throat. Such was Tiny's vise-like grasp, that he could not cry out; he could only flounder helplessly in the arms of his enemy, and look savagely into his face. Tiny took the hatchet out of his hand, and threatened him with instant death if he dared to move. Divesting him of the head-dress which he wore, he placed it on his own head, and slipping away from the tree, bound the savage in his place, taking care to gag him effectually. This he accomplished by tying a small piece of cord about a short stick, thrusting it into the Indian's mouth, and tying it behind his ears.

When sure that he was tightly bound, he retreated to a little distance, looking at him with a grin. Taking up the arms of the discomfited warrior, he returned to his station at the other tree, looking over the camp with the greatest nonchalance.

After enjoying his position as long as he cared to, he started down toward the camp-fire, and turning his feet toward it, lay down to enjoy the pleasant warmth. He soon forgot his troubles, and was off for the land of Nod.

He slept until daybreak, and was aroused by the yells of the savages, who had just discovered their comrade, bound to the tree, in place of the prisoner he had been left to guard. The negro rolled lazily over on his side, and surveyed the group around the tree. The savage who had slept by him had leaped up in haste, and did not notice who was left at the fire when the alarm sounded.

"Wish dey'd kill dat debble," said Tiny, possessing himself of a piece of venison, which had been left upon a stone by one of the savages, and beginning to roast it over the fire, tearing off a piece as soon as it became brown, for he feared that the Indians would interrupt him in his repast. He was progressing famously, when Anga-wam, who was first to see the negro bending over the fire, sprung at him, and seized him by the arm.

"What you do here?" he demanded, furiously.

"Cook my breakfuss. Jes' you lemme go."

Anga-wam did not comply, and the negro butted him over without ceremony, rolling him

headlong to the earth, with a sharp cry of rage and pain. He was up in a moment, whirling a hatchet in the air. But the negro still held the arms of his enemy of the night before, and grasped the gun in both hands, meeting the rush of his adversary by a thrust with the stock, which sent him to mother earth, minus two of his front teeth.

By this time he had recovered from his first burst of anger, and instead of rushing at the negro again, he kept back the crowd of Indians who were swarming about like bees, and told the negro to lay down the gun and submit to be bound.

"Shall I, Miss Flo'?" cried the negro, looking toward his mistress, who had emerged from the tent, and was watching the proceedings. "Say de word, an' I go froo 'em like lightnin'. I will dat."

"You had better surrender," replied Flora.

He at once threw down his arms and submitted to be bound. In the mean time, a piece of stern justice was wrought upon the would-be murderer of Tiny. He was examined, and it was proved against him that he had attempted to kill the prisoner, and in doing so, miserably failed, and had put the safety of the camp in jeopardy. He was doomed—not for the attempt, for they thought it no more than just that he should revenge himself upon the negro—but for the failure, and its results. He was taken into the woods, tomahawked, and a pile of stones laid above him.

They now hurried their march, and put another guard over the irrepressible negro, who continued to express his supreme contempt for the whole united Huron nation.

They came in sight of the Huron village at last. They had ascended a broad slope, and reached the most elevated point of a lofty ridge, when one of the captors touched Flora on the arm, and pointed downward. There lay the village, nestling down among the trees, by the side of a shining lake. It was a cluster of rude lodges, laid out in regular order, with a broad, vacant space in the center. Looking downward, though the place was six or seven miles away, so uninterrupted was the downward grade that the figures of men and animals could be made out by a pair of sharp eyes. From the place where they stood to the village, the land descended in a gentle slope, and the short, green turf, the pleasant lake, the distant village, formed together one of the most beautiful scenes in nature.

Flora, prisoner though she was, could not but be struck with the beauty of the landscape. The band expressed their joy in short exclamations, and by that lighting up of the faces which appears upon the countenance of every creature, when nearing home after a long absence.

"These creatures," she thought, "who never shudder at the shedding of blood, who would not hesitate to burn a captive at the stake, who delight in acts of torture, are joyful at the prospect of returning home. Shall I ever see home and friends again? Will Benjamin ever know what has been my fate?"

She fell into a reverie, from which she did not rouse till the shouts of the villagers, swarming out to meet them, told her that they were drawing near to the village. They entered the broad

space in the center, surrounded by a motley crowd of women and children. The old men, who had been left in the village, stood before the tents, calmly waiting for the young men to alight, before they welcomed the leaders of their defenders home.

An-ga-wam was first to alight, and came up to the chief with uncovered head.

"My young brother is come," said an aged patriarch of his race; "what does he bring?"

"The young men have been upon the war-path, and have taken many scalps. They have taken prisoners, too, and they are before you."

"I see a young squaw among the prisoners. Let her be made welcome."

"Where is Me-rah?"

"She is within the wigwam."

"Me-rah is here," said a silvery voice. "What would the war-chief have with her?"

"Let her ask the white maiden to alight, and make her welcome to the wigwam. She has come a long distance, and is tired."

Me-rah turned to obey, and as Flora heard her voice, she looked down in wonder upon the beautiful girl who addressed her. Among the Indians there are few beautiful women, whatever may be said to the contrary. But when we find one who can lay claim to it, it is beauty of no common order. Me-rah's face was a perfect Grecian in its outline, with long, midnight masses of hair, which, without a curl or wave, swept half-way to her feet. Eyes of a liquid tenderness at times, dark, and full of a passionate fire—such a beauty might have been looked for among the children of the sun, the Aztecs. Such a one might Marianna have been, the Aztec love of Hernando Cortez.

"Let the white girl descend," said she, "and follow Me-rah into the lodge. She is very welcome to the lodges of the Hurons."

Flora obeyed the request, and stood within the lodge, which was rudely decked with barbaric ornaments. Soft couches, formed of the skins of wild beasts, seemed to invite repose. Flora sunk down upon one of these with a sigh of relief.

"The white girl is weary," said Me-rah. "Let her rest and be content. Me-rah will not trouble her now."

She passed from the wigwam; and Flora, lying back among the soft skins, was soon oblivious to all outward things. How long she slept she could not tell, but when she awoke, the sweet face of Me-rah bent above her, and her soft voice asked, kindly:

"Has the white girl rested well?"

"Very well, thanks to you. Have you watched by me while I slept?"

"Yes; the old chief has said to Me-rah: 'Take thou the white girl; let her be thy charge.'"

"I am glad they have given me into your keeping. You will be a kind jailer. I have been dreaming."

"Were the dreams of the 'Pleasant Voice' good?"

Flora had been named by the band, in their romantic fashion, the "Pleasant Voice."

"I dreamed I was at home again, among those who loved me, and I awoke full of hope."

"Hope is good," said Me-rah, in such pure English that Flora was astonished, and asked, quickly:

"How did you learn to speak my language?"

"It will be a long story to tell, but if the white girl wills it she shall hear it."

"I should love it; it will serve to pass away the time."

"It was many years ago, when the snows were white upon the mountains, and I was a little child. She was an Indian; she had an Indian heart, and could shout with the warriors when the warriors brought home scalps. The white girl might have seen, this day, that I came not out with the rest to meet the warriors. That is because my heart is soft; it is sad for me to see scalps; to look upon the prisoners they bring with them. I think that some new home has been made desolate, some father has lost a son, some mother weeps for a child; and so I came not forth, until I saw your face through the curtain. My heart went out to meet yours; I loved you, and wished you to come into my lodge. The chief called me, and I came."

Flora let her hand rest in that of the beautiful Indian girl, and the story went on.

"I said it was long ago, and the winter was cold. The ice on the river was very thick; the crust on the drifts hard; the snow-shoes hardly left a track. One day the hunters went out with their sledges after the moose. They found a white man freezing at the root of a tree; but he lived, and we loved him when we knew him. I was a little child, and came to look upon him. He was an Englishman, who had been wronged by his people, and had fled away and come to live among us.

"We gave him a place in our lodges, and named him the 'Withered Oak,' because he had lived his life away from the place where his roots were set. When he came among us he brought with him a book. Would you like to see it?"

"Yes," said Flora.

She went to the corner of the lodge, and from a deep box took a book, which she gave to Flora with reverent hands.

"The 'Holy Book,'" she whispered.

Flora took it. One of those cumbersome editions of the Holy Scriptures which the London press at that time published. Flora turned to the fly-leaf and read:

"I, John Lambert, fleeing from the persecution of mine own people, have found rest among a people who, while they worship the One God, know not the Christ. Among these will I die."

Flora, while she held that book in her hands, dreamed what kind of a man this might be. Some stern, uncompromising Christian, who could not brook the vanities which were creeping into his own church, and who left all behind him, and plunged into the untrodden wilderness, with his Bible in his hand.

"Tell me more of this man," said she.

"I learned to love him; he read to me from the book, taught me how to understand it, and how to love it. He taught me the language of your people, and then he taught me how to read the book. I believed it, and from that time I take no delight in blood."

"Is he dead?"

"Two years ago we made him a grave on the slope, and he sleeps. Dying, he gave me the book, told me to guard it as my life, love it and

obey it. I try to do so. And I, who am a prophetess among my people, can do much good."

Here was a marvel, and Flora looked upon the beautiful girl in amazement. A Christian, about the relics of a barbarism of the sternest The. Had Flora known the impressible nature of the Indian, she would not have wondered so much.

They two spent some pleasant hours together, talking of past and present events, and of the sad fate of the friends of Flora. From her she learned that Hau-do and An-ga-wam were not members of the tribe, but renegade Mohawks. That they were brave in battle, and brought home many scalps, and for that found favor in the eyes of the people. That she, as prophetess, was able to countermand many of their cruel orders; and that Hau-do hated her, while An-ga-wam wanted to make her his wife. This she had steadily refused, and An-ga-wam had no power to enforce his wishes. But he had sworn, when he went on his last expedition, that he would find a way to break her pride, and make her his own. He had never been true to the English, whom he hated fervently. After this, Flora knew why Alph had said that he would yet be false to the English.

CHAPTER VII.

UNDER THE BAN.

THE rescue party, with untiring patience, had followed the trail of the Indians, and stood upon the summit of the ridge looking down into the Indian village. There it lay, the place that held their treasure.

"She's dar, she is," said the giant. "Dey've got my boy, too, Tiny. 'Spec's dat chile gibs dem heaps ob trouble, I does. I h'ars him when I's a lyin' on de floor ob de house, callin' on seberal of de p'ison snakes to step out and fight him, an' dey dassen't do it, nobow."

Alph, knowing the irascible nature of Tiny, smiled as he thought how that acute youth would bother the Indians.

"We must find a place to hide," said Alph. "As it may be some weeks before our plans are fully carried out, it will not do for us to loiter about here, without having some secure hiding-place. Let us go further up the mountains. These hills are full of holes, and it will go hard but we shall find one large enough to burrow in."

They passed up the mountain. Huge boulders lying on the spot to which they had been hurled, hemmed them in on every side. The course they took led them in an oblique direction toward the village, and they had lighted yet upon no place which suited their fancy.

As they were passing through a defile between two lofty cliffs, the attention of Alph was called to a small circular opening a little way up the face of one. Clinging by his hands and feet, he reached the mouth of the opening and looked in. All was dark and silent as the grave.

"This looks like the very place we want, Ben," said he. "Get a knot from that pitch-pine there and light it, if you can. I have a mind to explore this place."

A fallen pine, partially decayed, gave them a torch in a moment, for it was the fat-pine

used so often for that purpose. Lighting this, Alph led the way, and soon found himself in a small cavern, with a large opening upon the other side, through which the sunlight poured freely. Throwing away the torch, when they found it of no further use, they continued the march along the edge of the mountain ridge, finding that the path they now pursued led them nearer the village.

About a mile further on, upon the spur of the hills nearest the village, they found a secure hiding-place. It was approached only by a rugged path, and they could overlook the village, which lay, as it seemed, at their very feet.

There was a great stir among the Indians. Squaws were hurrying to and fro, bringing bundles of sticks, and stopping to peer at some one who was partially concealed behind a lodge.

He was soon led out by a couple of stout warriors, and tightly bound to a stake. The warriors began to come out in scattered groups, indulging in their rude games. Their whoops could be heard by the watchers on the hill.

The person who was bound to the post was our fighting friend Tiny, who was gesticulating, in a warlike manner, and inviting the whole tribe to "come on, only to fight fa'r."

The watchers looked on with great interest. As yet, they could not make out the design of the captors. It looked like torture, but of what kind they could not guess.

After a while each warrior provided himself with a stick, and they fell into a double line, with an open space about six feet wide in the center.

"What are the rascals at?" asked Ben.

"It is a gantlet, I think. I wonder who will run?"

"I don't know. If it is Tiny, look out for fun."

"Yes, it is a gantlet, and they are forming in two lines. Here come the prisoners. Poor lads, they never knew what trouble was on Middleton's plantation. Just look at Tiny; he walks as though he were head chief of the tribe."

"Dar's my boy, dar's Tiny," said the giant, eagerly, a look of fatherly pride making his black face comely. "Ho tek' car' of heself, I bet. Jest see how dem Injins keep away from him. Dey's 'fraid ob dem feet, dey is!"

One of the chiefs had placed himself in front of Tiny, and was explaining to him the principle of the gantlet. It was plain that they looked for trouble from the stout young negro, for they made their line very strong, and every one was on the alert. At a given signal Tiny was freed from his bonds, and manifested his delight by sundry leaps into the air, cracking his heels together, crowing and laughing. The savages evidently did not know what to make of a fellow who could enjoy "running a muck."

The signal was repeated, and Tiny, with a single bound, reached the first of his enemies. Right and left flew the Indians, butted by the unimpressible head. Tomahawks and clubs cracked upon it, without any visible effect, and still he sped on. Once in a while he would pause, and send out his huge foot, leveling an Indian in the dust. Cries of rage and pain marked his progress. In all their history, the

Indians had never found a man who could inflict such damage, receiving none in return.

"See dar!" cried Big Sam. "Look a' dem Injin fly. Oh, Tiny, da's a good one. Butt him ag'in! You's a chile after you fader's own heart, you is. Oh, de Lord, dar he goes ag'in, knocks 'em right an' lef', jest as ef dey was so many sticks. Dey'll be careful how dey meks he 'run a muck' ag'in. By gosh, he's runnin' away."

This was the truth. Tiny had evidently tired of the society of the Huron village, and no sooner had he cleared the lines of the gantlet, and was expected to return, than he plied his heels in a desperate attempt to escape. He was a mighty runner, and used his feet well. The best men among the savages had placed themselves first, in order to get the first blow at the negro. These had fared badly enough in the flight of that worthy, being tumbled ignominiously upon the grass. When they attempted to follow the runner, they found their course impeded by a mingled group of women and children, and could make but slow progress.

Tiny knew what he was about, and was making directly for the horses, picketed upon the greenward, a hundred yards away. Rushing into their midst, he tore up the lariat which bound the fleetest among them, and leaping upon him, dug his heels into his sides, turned his head to the mountain, and was off like the wind, shouting back his defiance to the discomfited foe, who continued to run after him, though morally certain that they could not catch him. Some of the more cunning darted back for their muskets, while some, in fear and trembling, mounted the remaining horses, and started in pursuit.

Tiny pressed on up the mountain, looking back, from time to time, at the yelling crowd. Ben quickly descended from his perch, and ran hastily out of the opening into the defile. The daring young negro was too good an addition to their party to be lost. How much, then, was Tiny startled by the apparition of a white man, standing directly in his path. Upon a second look, he recognized him.

"Good Lord! Massa Ben, dat you?"

"Yes; dis'nount."

He got down from his horse without question.

"Strike your horse, and send him on."

The negro applied his broad palm to the flank of the horse, uttering a sharp cry. The startled beast dashed on, and was soon hidden from view by the rocks.

"He won't stop under three miles. Follow me."

Ben returned to the cave, followed by Tiny, who only knew that the young man had ordered him to do this, and obeyed with the blind faith peculiar to his race. Down into the bowels of the mountain, and again into the light, and the escaped prisoner stood in the presence of his father. Tiny had seen him bound and helpless, laid upon the floor of the burning cabin, and to him it seemed like a resurrection from the dead. There was a silent hand-pressure, for they had learned the virtue of silence, and the tears dimmed the eyes of each—father and son, alike rescued from a terrible fate.

"Ki!" said Tiny, at length. "Knew dey c'u'dn't kill you, fader."

"Dat's so, boy; dey try you hard 'nuff, too; but you git 'way; ha! ha! ha!"

"Who's 'fraid of dem? Psho! Dey ain't wu'th nottin'. Jest h'ar dem."

The savages were giving up in despair, and returning to their lodges. The fleet steed had gone on, and deluded them into the belief that the negro was still upon his back.

"Have you seen Miss Flora, Tiny?"

"Oh, yes; she's dar. Dey hain't done not tin' to her—use her fu'st rate. Dar's a gal dar, de prophetess, an' she's taken to Miss Flo'. She's a stunner, she is. Mos' as han'some as Miss Flo'. Well, she takes car' of Miss Flo' herself."

"Ah! that is well. If I could meet that girl now, I think I could make something out of her fancy for Flora. Do the warriors all mean to stay in the village, Tiny?"

This name was given to the young negro, not because he was diminutive in size, for he stood six feet two in his moccasins, but because he was smaller than his father.

"No, sar. I tinks dat dis is de las' day ob da'r games, an' den dey goes off to de wars again."

"Good, good; are you sure of this?"

"Yes, sar; I heard dat An-ga-wam talk to de udders. 'Pears like dey's waiting for some one dey calls Hau-do. W'en he comes, dey go away."

"We must wait, then. Do not look so disconsolate, Ben. Look at the matter in its right light, and remember, moreover, that you are under my orders. If we attempt her rescue, and fail, it will be next to impossible to do it afterward. So that we must calculate every chance to make the matter as sure as possible. If we attempt it while all the warriors are in the village, of course our chance will be less than if we try it when but one-quarter of the number remain. In that case, we might, if it were necessary, take her away by main force. Come up here, Tiny, and show me the exact position of affairs."

The party went up to the opening, and Tiny pointed out the different lodges, and told by whom they were occupied.

"See dat lodge, wid t'ree poles on de top, an' a kind ob flag in de middle? Well, da's whar dey keep Miss Flo'. Watch dat place clust, an' mebbe she'll come out. Dey do come out mos' days, 'bout dis time, an' git a breff ob fresh air. I s'pec's dem fellers ain't dis'p'inted none in me. Dey reckoned on lots ob fun. Count t'ree lodges from de one whar Miss Flo' is, an' you will see whar de rest ob de boys am. Dey don't tek' it so kindly as me. More fools dey. I keeps sassin' at dem all de time, fast as I can, an' dey likes me all de better. Dar's Miss Flo'!"

As he spoke, the lodge-curtain was lifted, and Flora, accompanied by Me-rah, came out into the central square, for her daily walk. Little did she know that so many faithful hearts were near her, ready to shed their blood, if necessary, in her defense. Ben began to chafe.

"It would do her so much good, only to let her know we are here," he said.

"It can not be done, Ben. She will do well enough. Hah! be quiet; let us see who comes."

Some one was coming at a quick pace down

the slope. To reach the village, he must pass close to the mountain. A few minutes elapsed, and he came out into full view. Alph suppressed a cry of anger with difficulty. It was Hau-do, the scout.

"How I would like to send a bullet through that knave's head. The wretch betrayed me to Dieskau, and let in the light upon the best disguise I ever used to fool the French."

Hau-do was hurrying on, with the long lope peculiar to the Indian. He looked dusty and travel-stained; his fanciful dress was in confusion, which was not often the case with this savage dandy. In truth, he had traveled all the way from the battle-field where Dieskau lost his life. After the lacing received from the two scouts, he fell in with a band of Hurons, and sent as many as would go to watch the cabin of Middleton, while, with the rest, he followed the brothers. What he accomplished, we have seen.

When the battle was over, he did not pause on it, but turned northward through the forest to the Huron village, to which An-ga-wam had promised to come with his prisoners. He hoped that Flora would be among them. His heart still burned against Alph, although he did not know he had escaped.

He entered the village, and passed at once to his lodge, returning moodily the greetings of those who gathered about him. They, knowing his mood, left him to himself, waiting until he should be ready to meet them.

Flora's time had passed happily enough while she was with Me-rah. She found the girl of a loving disposition, the fruit of her training under that Puritan teacher, John Lambert. They had seen Hau-do coming, and obeying the touch of Me-rah's hand, Flora followed her at once into the tent.

"Does the Pleasant Voice know Hau-do?"

"I have seen him twice, and I fear him," replied Flora.

"Hau-do is bad; he has the wicked spirit in his heart. I have heard him speak of you, and he has sworn that you shall be his squaw."

Flora uttered a cry, and set her lips firmly.

"Never! I would die first."

"He is a bad man. I know not what he would not do. Do you know the English scouts, two brothers, who are so like that you cannot tell them apart?"

"Yes," said Flora, with a blush, "I know them."

The Indian girl smiled.

"He hates them both, and my sister's face has told me why. Does the Pleasant Voice sigh for her home and friends?"

"Who could be happy, away from those we love?"

"If Hau-do has his will, you will never see them more. Hark!"

A voice was heard without, demanding admittance to the tent of the prophetess. A moment after, Hau-do entered. He was covered from head to foot with Indian finery. A belt of wampum, wrought with figures of beasts and birds, was slung over his right shoulder, passed across his breast, and wound twice about his waist. His dress was more gaudy than ever with beads and porcupine-quills. Ornamented moccasins, flashing with glass tinsel, covered his

feet. He waited until this tremendous triumph of Indian finery had time to work its full effect, and then spoke:

"The Pleasant Voice is very welcome to the lodge of the Huron. She has come to stay."

"The Pleasant Voice is unhappy away from her people. She sighs for the running river, and the green fields around her home. She would return and dwell there."

"The fields are no longer pleasant," replied the chief, calmly, "for the foot of war has been set upon them. Let the white girl go forth, and look about her. She will see pleasant lakes, and hear the music of falling waters. The fields are very green, and the woods ring with the music of the birds. If the white girl loves all these, she can find them near the lodge of the Hurons."

"The woods are not my own, and the waterfall is not in my native river. The skins of the Hurons are red; mine is white. I cannot dwell in the lodges of the Huron. Let me return to my own people, and my heart shall be made glad."

"The Pleasant Voice asks too much. She cannot return to the lodges of her people. The way is long, and her feet would tire. Let her be content, and dwell in the pleasant lands of the Huron. See, I am a Mohawk, and a war-chief; but I left the home of my father, the tumbling river and the pleasant lakes, and found a new home with the Hurons of the lakes. They had a welcome and a warm lodge for the chief, and they gave him their hands in friendship. He is happy here; why, then, may not the Pleasant Voice?"

"It cannot be; her heart is with her own people."

"When I was in the land of the English, I saw two cages hung against a wall. In one was a bird from the free woods, and in the other, one with wings of gold. The first one beat its wings against the wire, and died. The other sung sweet songs all the day long."

"Did you not long to see that bird at liberty? Did it make you happy when it died?"

Hau-do was silent; his Indian nature had indeed revolted at the confinement of the bird.

"I am like that bird," continued Flora; "I cannot live away from my people. If you keep me, I shall die."

"The white girl is alone. She is afraid there will be none to fill her lodge with meat in winter. It is well. Hau-do has a large lodge, and it is empty. She shall be the wife of a great chief."

"Never!"

"The Pleasant Voice says it, but what can she do? Is she not a prisoner?"

"She is not your prisoner," said Me-rah, speaking for the first time.

Hau-do turned upon her with an angry frown. His fingers worked convulsively.

"Let the prophetess of the Hurons beware. She has meddled enough in the councils of the warriors. She shall do so no longer. This girl is mine—she shall do as I say."

"She shall not. The chiefs have given her to me, and bidden me to take care of her. Go your way, Mohawk, and trouble us not."

"Is she not the prisoner of An-ga-wam?"

"Yes; but An-ga-wam has given her to me,

Do you think he would yield her if I asked him not?"

Hau-do knew the passion of his friend for the prophetess, and that he would go through anything to do her a service. He quivered with rage.

"It is well," he said. "You have chosen to defy me. You shall feel what it is to arouse the anger of a great chief."

"Go!" said Me-rah. "You are a squaw, for you threaten women. Is that the part of a great chief?"

Hau-do rushed from the lodge. Near the door he was met by An-ga-wam.

"My brother has returned."

"He has; the French rest in their great wig-wam, and prepare for a new battle. The old chief, Dieskau, is taken, and another has his place. He has sent the talking-paper to all the tribes, calling upon them to lift the hatchet. I have come to lead the braves again to battle. Has my brother done what he set out to do?"

"It is finished," said he, coolly.

"What will my brother do with the white maiden?"

"The Pleasant Voice is nothing to me. I have given her to the prophetess."

"My brother knew that Hau-do had chosen her for his squaw."

"I have also chosen the prophetess for mine, but that does not bring her into my lodge," said An-ga-wam, philosophically.

"Very true; my brother does not get his squaw. But he should make her come into his lodge."

"Does my brother know what the Hurons would do to the man who lifted his hand against the prophetess? They would take him, and burn him with fire."

"Will the chief give this white girl up to me?"

"She is not mine to give."

"Listen," said Hau-do, coming near the other, and hissing the words in his ear. "Does the chief forget—it is not very long ago—how he was beaten, like a dog, with rods?"

An angry glitter came into the eyes of An-ga-wam.

"He has not forgotten. When the chief thinks of that, his back burns."

"Does he remember that the one who beat him like an English hound was to have taken the Pleasant Voice into a lodge of his own?"

"He remembers all this."

"Then why is he so tender with the white girl, that he treats her even as the prophetess?"

"An-ga-wam is not a snake in the grass; he cannot speak with two tongues. If he ever meets this man who has beaten him, he will have his blood; but the Pleasant Voice is given to Me-rah. If Me-rah will keep her safe, well; if not, she must be watched."

"My brother says he is not a snake in the grass, and he lies. Hau-do will have nothing to do with such a friend. He knew when he burned the house of the O-en-Han-l (Middleton) that the Pleasant Voice was to be mine. He said he was my friend. I spit upon such friendship. I count him mine enemy."

"An-ga-wam is not a boy, to be scared by the hooting of an owl. If Hau-do ever saw him turn back on the day of battle, let him speak."

He does not dress like a squaw, or paint his face, but his knife is keen, and his aim sure. Why will Hau-do talk? Let him do something."

"The Pleasant Voice shall be mine."

"Good: if my brother can get the Pleasant Voice, she shall be his indeed. My brother has a long tongue. Perhaps if he talk long enough, he will charm the white maiden out of the lodge."

There was much grim humor in the composition of An-ga-wam, and it maddened Hau-do. He did what, under ordinary circumstances, he would not have done. He jerked out his hatchet, and struck An-ga-wam with the handle. This is the Indian challenge, and was so accepted by An-ga-wam. He replied by baring his knife, and tapping his adversary on the shoulder.

"Where shall we fight?" said he.

"At the foot of the mountain."

"When?"

"Now."

"My brother is too fast. There is work to do in the village. The one who survives this battle must be the one to lead the warriors to the aid of our great father at Quebec. If I fall, you are the man; if you, then will An-ga-wam do his best."

"We will wait; let it be as you say. To-morrow, at sunrise, we will fight."

"To-night we are friends. What would my father with An-ga-wam?"

An old chief had approached, and touched him on the arm. An-ga-wam obeyed the motion of his hand, and followed him into the lodge.

"What said Hau-do to An-ga-wam?"

"We must fight together."

"It cannot be."

"We must."

"He is under the ban of the council. He meets with us to-night. When we are done with him, he may fight with you, if he be alive."

There was a grim meaning in the old chief's tone.

"What has he done?"

"Has my brother ever thought to ask him where Mo-ne-ton is?"

"My father speaks in riddles."

"Did not the boy go forth with him alone?"

"He did."

"Has he returned?"

"No; perhaps he fell in battle."

"So Hau-do says. We know he hated Mo-ne-ton. The boy was very brave, and he said that Hau-do was a snake. We asked him to tell us how Mo-ne-ton died. He said, like a man, in battle with the English. Come and see."

An-ga-wam followed him into a lodge aside from the rest, and at the door of which stood a guard. They entered. Upon a couch of skins, in one corner of the room, lay the body of a young brave, embalmed after a manner still in use among Indian tribes."

"Here is the body of my son," said the old chief, not a muscle of his face telling the agony that must have wrung his heart at sight of his only son dead at his feet. "What say you to the story of Hau-do? Did my son die in battle?"

"Hau-do has lied. Where did you find the body?"

"Two days after they departed upon the war path together, two braves went out to hunt,

They shot a deer, and it fell down the rocks. While climbing after it they found my son, cast like a stone into the pit. He was dead, and close beside him lay the hatchet of Hau-do. We called the council, and all said, 'Let him die.' We waited only for your voice, and his return. What say you?"

"Let him die."

"It is well. Mo-ne-ton, thou shalt be avenged. A little while to wait, my son, and he shall join you in the happy hunting-grounds."

An Indian drum sounded, beaten with measured strokes, and the warriors began to gather to the council. Hau-do came too, gaudy in dress and insolent in bearing. He knew nothing of the cause of the council, and he did not heed the angry glances cast upon him from every side.

The chiefs did not sit; a platform had been built in the council-ground, and around it gathered, first the chiefs and braves, and then the women. Then a stern voice cried:

"See!"

And forth from the lodge, painted in somber black, came the bearers of the body, and laid it on the platform. Until that instant, Hau-do had not dreamed what the meeting might mean. But the moment the body appeared, he knew his doom. Then came a group of girls, bearing flowers, which they cast upon the platform where the body lay, singing, in a slow monotone, the funeral chant:

"He is fallen, he is fallen!
The brave man is dead;
Not in the battle,
Not on the spear,
Not in the claws of the panther;
He was slain from behind,
He was cut down by a coward;
Let us give him a grave—
Let him sleep with his fathers—
And go to the happy hunting-grounds.
And he, the wicked one, shall die,
And wander in darkness forever."

Taken in the toils, without a hope of escape from the stern ring hemming him round, Hau-do resigned himself to his fate. He knew that death alone could atone for his crime. His doom would be just. He had quarreled with the young brave, and struck him on the head with his hatchet, taking him unawares. In making the stroke he lost his hatchet, and pursued his way, leaving the body to molder where it fell. This betrayed him, although he had thought that none would descend the precipice. He was taken fairly, and must expiate his crime.

The father of Mo-ne-ton rose, and turned upon the murderer:

"Behold your work, son of the bad Manitou. My son is dead by your hand. I accuse thee. Not as a man, fighting hand to hand, but as a coward, who fears to face his enemy, you struck him. Say, is it not so, Hau-do, chief of the Mohawks?"

"I killed him," replied Hau-do, setting his teeth. "He dared to defy me, and I killed him. Do with me as you will."

"What shall be done with him?" said the old chief.

And with one voice they shouted, "Let him die!"

"It is spoken," replied the sage. "Lead him forth."

The young men lifted the body and bore it slowly away. Behind it walked the murderer, strongly guarded. A party had been out before, and made preparations. It was a wild, sequestered glen among the hills. Here a cairn had been built, and here the procession paused.

"Let this be called the valley of Mo-ne-ton, for here the murderer of Mo-ne-ton dies by my hand," cried the old chief. "Murderer, stand forth!"

Hau-do came and stood before him with folded arms. Despite his finery, he had a brave heart, and did not fear to meet death.

"You have been a brave man," said his executioner, "and have taken many scalps. The Hurons loved you, and the squaws sung of the noble deeds of Hau-do. If it were not for this, you should die like a dog, and be fed to them. But since you have been a warrior, like a warrior you shall die."

"We have made two graves, one for you and one for Mo-ne-ton. We have made yours nearest the happy hunting-grounds, so that perchance you may overtake the spirit of Mo-ne-ton before it reaches the other shore. Have you anything to say?"

"I am ready. Let the hatchet fall."

The old chief advanced, and lifted the hatchet. The rays of the sun fell upon the bent head, and showed him where to strike. There was a flash, the dull thud of the hatchet as it struck the bone, and Hau-do, the Mohawk, fell a bleeding corpse at the feet of the man whose son he had murdered. A smile of grim satisfaction swept over the aged face. Mo-ne-ton was well avenged.

They buried the two as he had said. The procession swept back to the village, and, next day, the warriors went out upon the war-path, led by An-ga-wam. Half a dozen braves remained in the village, to see that the prisoners were safely kept, and now that the pugnacious Tiny had escaped, they had little trouble.

The brothers had witnessed the death of Hau-do, and the departure of the warriors, with joy. They determined to remain in the place where they now were until the savages became quiet, and they were quite sure they would not return. At night, after their departure, Alph determined to visit the village. His brother was inclined to rebel, and claim it as his right, but Alph reminded him of his promise, and he yielded at once. Tiny wished to go, and, upon reflection, Alph decided to take him along, and station him somewhere outside the village, to come to his aid in case of need. Tiny was overjoyed, executing a fancy pirouette upon the occasion, and waited somewhat impatiently for the night. If it should be clear, they must be very careful indeed, as it would not do to awaken the suspicions of even the small party in the village. Besides, Alph had too good an opinion of the powers of some of the old squaws in a fight, to care to arouse them. Resolved to communicate with Flora at all hazards, he waited for the night.

CHAPTER VIII.

A SPY IN THE CAMP.

THE night came, and, luckily for them, it was dark and gloomy.

The two spies, having bidden adieu to the others, and instructed them how to proceed in case they got into trouble, crawled out of the cavern, and began to cross the slope toward the village. Their rapid pace soon brought them near it, when they lay down upon the earth and listened. Nothing could be heard to indicate that any were awake in the village, and they crept cautiously forward, and soon found a snug position between two lodges, in the outskirts. Here Alph decided to leave Tiny, instructing him to remain very quiet, and on no account to leave the place until he returned. Tiny promising compliance, Alph left him, and bending his body to a stooping position, and keeping in the shadow of the lodges, he made his way into the very center of the village.

Here he paused to collect his thoughts. He wanted to find the lodge in which Flora was confined, and as the night was of pitchy darkness, eyes were of but little use to him. He remembered that the lodge was of peculiar shape, being eight-sided, and having three poles. As he stepped forward a little, his foot touched some yielding substance. Stooping, he found by the sense of feeling that it was a rope, stretched from the top of a lodge, and fastened to a pin in the ground. He knew that the lodge of Me-rah was the only one which was fastened in this way, and that he had unconsciously stumbled upon the one he sought.

He lay down again and listened for the tread of the Indian sentry, who he knew could not be far off, congratulating himself that he had come up on this side instead of the other. In a few moments he heard him coming, and he knew that he was making the circuit of the lodge. Crowding quickly in behind the lodge-ropes, he rolled himself closely up against the side of the lodge, and waited. The sentry came slowly along, probing out every nook and corner with his gun-barrel. It was evident that his suspicions had been aroused in some way, and that he was determined to be sure that no enemies lurked in that quarter.

Alph rose to his feet, seeing the care with which the fellow was searching, and got into a better position for defense. But, as luck would have it, at this moment some one called to the sentry from a lodge not far away, and placed before him a temptation which it was against nature, at least Indian nature, standing guard on a cold night, to resist.

"What dat, eh? You, Mon-da-min? Got something?"

"Yes."

"What got, eh?"

"Fire-water! Ugh, good!"

A hearty smack of the lips sounded out of the darkness.

"Ugh, good! S'pose me come, give me some, eh?"

"Oh, yes; come. Got 'nuff for bot'."

The fellow saw at once the uselessness of standing guard when such things were thrown in his way, and besides, the utter impossibility of any enemy being near. So he passed over to his friend, while Alph improved the opportunity to shift his quarters to a spot nearer the lodge, and over which he had already passed in his search.

"S'pose white girl try to get 'way?"

"No; what for she try? Can't do it. Can't run like black man. Yah! See him run?"

"Yes."

"Stick you wid his head?"

"No."

"Did me. T'ought I be kill, den, sure."

"He brack debbel; glad he gone; all time makin' fuss."

"W'at you think An-ga-wam say to me?" said the sentry, warming with the liquor.

"Don't know; what?"

"He wants the prophetess for his squaw."

"Yes; can't git her, dough."

"Says he will hab her now. Dat's what he lef us for, all his friends. We goin' to tek white girl bimeby, an' carry her out de village. An-ga-wam no go on war-path. Send all braves on but ten, and go nudder way wid dese. Come back here, and wait in hills."

"Goin' to do it?"

"Yes; t'ink we be der'."

"When?"

"Bimeby; pretty soon."

"S'pose she scream; mek noise?"

"We tek car' ob dat; she no mek much noise, an' if she do—"

Alph had heard enough; his plan was laid with the quickness of light. They should carry the prophetess out, as they proposed, and he would turn it to his own advantage. Slipping silently to the front of the lodge, he glided quickly in. A taper burned dimly in one corner, and by its light he saw the two girls sleeping upon a couch of bearskins, with their arms wreathed about each other, and their rosy lips parted enough to show the pearly teeth. The skin of the Indian was almost as white as her friend's, and her form was as faultless.

He had no time to gaze at them, but stooping, he quickly placed a hand over either's mouth and nostrils, awaking them by the movement, and preventing the scream they might have given in their surprise and alarm. Flora knew him at once, and he released her first, after whispering to her to be silent. They expressed no surprise when they knew him. It was the nature of the scout to be thus brave in the cause of those he loved.

"Oh, Alph, I knew you would come," whispered Flora. "Ben! is he safe?"

"Yes, but I would not let him come into the village. I was afraid he would be too rash."

"You are very, very rash, Alph. There is a guard just at the door."

"No, he is in the next lodge, drinking strong water with a friend. - You will not be troubled by him for the next half-hour. I overheard a little plan of theirs just now, and came in to tell you. An-ga-wam has not really gone to join the French, but has sent the main force on, retaining some with him in the mountains. He has formed a plot to seize the prophetess, and make her his wife by force. For this purpose the guards he has placed over you will enter after a few hours and carry you away. You had better make no opposition."

"Why?"

"Because Ben and myself, Tiny and Big Sam consider ourselves more than a match for ten Indians in the dark."

"You will attack them, and take us away?"

"Without doubt."

"You have no idea of failure?"

"That is not in our books. Big Sam is a match for five of them."

"And Tiny for five more; you ought to have seen how that fellow acted coming here. I thought he would provoke the Indians to kill him half a dozen times; he butted one poor fellow clear off his horse, and then kept butting him every time he tried to get up."

"Good for him; we saw him escape, and had him join us when he reached the mountains. I had better go. Do not be alarmed at anything your guards may do, and be sure and not make noise enough to wake the village. I—"

At this moment a fearful yell, such as could only come from the lungs of an excited female, rung through the village, coming from a lodge not far away. Directly after there was a shout from Tiny.

"Rot ye, ye darn old woman, let go yer hold, ef yer don't want to git hurt."

"The fellow has got himself into trouble, as I might have known he would," said Alph. "Good-by; I must get out of this the best I can, for it would not do to be taken. No, I am not going out that way, Flora. I must injure the lodge somewhat, I am afraid."

Taking out his knife, he cut a passage through the bark wall of the lodge near the spot where he had first lain down. Tiny's cries had ceased, and Alph was certain that he was either taken, or had made his escape. He worked his way out of the village, and made at once for his haunt in the mountains. A frightful din still prevailed, and Alph laughed, as he thought of the abrupt outcry of Tiny.

"What was the fellow doing?" he thought. He reached the haunt, and made his way at once into the presence of his friends. They were anxiously expecting him, and ready to go out to his rescue in case he did not return safely to them. Sam inquired for Tiny.

"I can not tell where he is; the fellow got himself into difficulty, as usual, confound him. Why could he not keep quiet?"

At this moment there came a puffing and struggling noise in the outer cavern, and Alph went out to ascertain the cause. He recognized the voice of Tiny, addressing some person who did not deign to make any reply.

"Come along, you red nigger. Got you now, ain't I? Wha' you skulk roun' dis house, for, you small-sized speciment, you. Come down, I say. 'Tain't no manner of use for you to be foolin' roun' dat way, 'cause you got to come."

After a while he made his appearance at the mouth of the cavern, dragging along an Indian boy, in the last stages of terror. He had a dim idea that he was seized upon by some bad spirit, some wicked Manitou, who would devour him in his den in the bowels of the earth. In the extremity of his terror he failed to recognize the negro, and took the others for attendant spirits. The lad had seen Alph leave the village, and had followed him with the probable intention of making his name immortal by his capture. At the opening to the cavern he had been seized by Tiny, who brought him into the presence of the others and now told his story.

Passing over his peculiar manner of pronunciation, we will say that after his master left him, he conceived the plan of setting his brother slaves at liberty without the aid of Alph. With this intention he left his safe position, in order to find the lodge where they were confined. He found what he decided was the lodge in question, and went in. Some one was sleeping in a corner, and Tiny, thinking it must be Dinah, the only black girl who had been saved from the attack on Middleton's house, took her by the shoulder, and shook her gently, and was somewhat surprised, not to say appalled, by the terrific scream which burst from her throat, while a pair of scraggy arms flew up and seized him.

As he was tolerably certain to do, Tiny had blundered into the wrong lodge, and aroused an ancient Indian lady who was trying to sleep off the effects of last night's potations.

Completely taken aback, Tiny had endeavored to shake off her grasp and escape, and had dragged her out into the open air, still clinging to him with a pertinacity worthy of a better cause. Seeing that gentle measures were lost upon her, Tiny tried what virtue there was in choking, which did not fail of its effect. The old lady released her hold of his person to take his hands from her throat, when, slapping her gently on the head to teach her better manners in future, he dropped her, and ran for his life.

All this would have been very well had he continued running, but so far from that, he ran against an Indian coming from an opposite direction. It is a well known fact in philosophy, that two heavy bodies of unequal weight coming in contact when moving with equal velocity, have an effect upon each other proportionate to their weight. The Indian, being lighter than his adversary, naturally recoiled several paces. But recovering his equilibrium, he at once threw himself upon Tiny, and endeavored to detain him. That individual, being troubled with none of those scruples which had restrained him in his encounter with the woman, at once grasped his adversary by the throat and proceeded to throttle him in the most approved style, stifling an incipient war-cry in a very summary manner. The Indian soon ceased to struggle, and Tiny dropped him and continued his flight, and after divers misadventures he at last found his way back to the mountain.

"What are we to do with this young animal?" said Ben, looking at the boy, who, having recovered from his terror, was casting sharp glances at them from his fierce black eyes. "He may do us a deal of mischief."

"You are right; I do not know what to do with him, and we have not a moment to lose. We must be near the village, for, my word for it, as soon as the Indians are quiet those fellows will carry off the girls."

"Let us take him out into the open ground, tie him hand and foot, and gag him. They will find him in the search that will be made in the morning."

"That is so," said Alph; and they proceeded to carry the plan into effect, notwithstanding the violent remonstrances of the boy, who had an idea that he was then and there to be sacri-

fied. He became more quiet when he found they were going to leave the cavern and take him with them. He was left upon the plain about half a mile from the village, while the party went nearer.

The plan of An-ga-wam was very well conceived, and only failed because of one little circumstance, which has caused the failure of many a plan since the foundation of the earth, namely, the propensity of some of those interested in the plot to talk before the time. If Alph had not heard the few words spoken by the Indian sentry on that night, his project would have succeeded well.

The village became quiet, and the deputies of An-ga-wam proceeded to the execution of their orders. The girls were aroused, apparently from a deep sleep, and the first thing they saw was a threatening hatchet, and heard an injunction to be quiet, if they valued their lives. Under ordinary circumstances, they would have been exceedingly terrified; but knowing what they did, they complied with an equanimity which surprised their savage captors. They were led at once from the lodge, and out upon the plain toward the mountains.

"There is many a slip twixt cup and lip," says the old proverb, and it was illustrated in this case. An-ga-wam, half a mile away, was calmly waiting for the coming of the men charged with the capture of the girls, and with every reason to believe that they would be brought. Why they were not, will appear at once.

The four men composing the guard had commenced to cross the plain, when they were suddenly and violently assailed, the maidens torn from their hands, and three of their number left stunned and bleeding on the ground. When they recovered, not a trace of their enemies could they see. They had nothing to do but to carry the tidings to An-ga-wam, and he to bear it with what philosophy he might, and prepare to pursue them in the morning. Swift runners set out for the lakes, determined to get before the brothers on their way. The path of the rescue-party was still beset with difficulties and dangers, and only when they had set foot within the wall of an English fort could they really claim to be safe from pursuit.

The fugitives fled all night, and morning found them still in the mountains, as their course must of necessity be slow in the darkness, burdened as they were with the females. Me-rah's love of Flora in these last few days, had so grown into her nature, that she had agreed to leave the home of her fathers, and live with her. Down the mountain-passes, through long defiles, past tumbling water-courses, fled the party, expecting every moment to hear the savages howling like mad wolves on their track.

As morning dawned, they rested, Tiny's skill soon found them a meal from the inhabitants of a running stream, near at hand. They ate with a keen zest, for their night of travel had given them a good appetite.

Alph was uneasy. He called Ben aside, and had a long talk with him, pointing often ahead. After a while, they returned to the rest of the party.

"We must tell you," said he, "that we are in danger. Every step we take is full of peril. I

find by observation that Indians have passed down this course in haste, and am led to the opinion that they are our enemies, the Hurons. They will be very likely to watch the mountain passes, and dispute our onward course."

"What will you do?" said Me-rah.

"We have concluded to go on, but as cautiously as possible. This, while it will favor us in one way, will be against us in another. It will give An-ga-wam an opportunity to get up with us, and this was doubtless his plan in sending these ahead."

"Do you think they are near?"

"No; the passes to the lakes are over ten miles away, and I take it they will not pause short of that."

"Stop," said Me-rah; "I have another plan. Would it be possible to reach the lake in any other way?"

"There are some passes behind us—about half a mile."

"Let us go to them. Perhaps they have not visited them."

"You are right. Get ready for the march. Poor girls; you will be footsore and weary before you reach the end of your journey."

"Not I," said Me-rah. "I was born among the mountains, and I never tire among them. But the Pleasant Voice, she will not do as well."

"Never fear for me," said Flora. "I have no doubt I shall do finely. Come; let us find this pass."

The young men shouldered their rifles, and led the way. Next marched the girls, holding one another's hands, while behind them walked Sam and Tiny, full of pluck and spirit, and rejoicing that they had been able to take "Miss Flo" out of the jaws of the lion. In this order they pursued their march.

The pass was reached in good time, and from the opening they looked in upon the beautiful lake. Clear as crystal, dotted here and there with fair isles, there is nothing in nature of such picturesque beauty as our Adirondack lakes. Flora uttered an exclamation of surprise and pleasure.

"If we were on one of those islands," said Alph, "and could keep quiet for a week we should be safe; for by that time An-ga-wam would be tired of waiting, and return to the North, thinking we had indeed escaped."

"Why not do it?" said Ben.

"How?"

"A raft, you know. Then let the last one who leaves the shore cover our trail in some way."

"It may do," said Alph. "By Jove, let's try it. Here are logs enough, and we ought to know how to build one—eh, lad?"

Ben laughed. Had they not been hampered by the helpless women, they would have considered themselves in no danger whatever. But their precious charge made them careful.

Logs there were in plenty, and the four men set to work, and in a half-hour had built a very strong raft, capable of carrying safely all their number. But the men did not intend to ride. Causing the girls to take their places on the center, they plunged into the water, after placing their rifles and ammunition on the raft, and began to draw and push the rude structure

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toward an island, perhaps a quarter of a mile away.

The distance was soon passed over, but instead of landing upon the side next that shore, they drew their great craft around to the other side of the island, and anchored it in a little cove, bowered in by forest trees. This done, Ben assisted the girls to land, and proceeded to survey the place.

It was a quaint little island, embracing perhaps a dozen acres. All around the edge ran a border of pines, completely screening the interior from view of those on either shore. Within, the sward was short and green, and the weary girls sat down at once, and rested. Ben proceeded to improvise a shelter for them, from the birch-boughs which lined one portion of the shore. Then he and Alph held another consultation.

"We are going to the shore," said the latter. "Take care of yourselves, and keep quiet. We may not return for some days, and we may return at once. What we are about, it is not fitting that you should know at present. When we return, we will tell you."

The brothers had started out with a fixed purpose, and did not falter in their course, but made at once for the path by which they had reached the lake. They traveled at their best speed, arrived at the pass, and pushed on for the pass in the next line of hills. This they succeeded in reaching before their pursuers.

The defile was deep, and slanted downward toward the north. It was here the brothers had determined to make a stand, and wait for the coming of the Hurons.

An-ga-wam had not wasted much time upon the way. Five of his men had been sent to guard the passes to the south, and with ten others he followed the trail. Much had been done to confuse him, but, with Indian cunning, he solved every puzzling circumstance, and was nearing the pass where the brothers waited.

Within a short distance of the spot, he paused, and sent one of his men cautiously forward, to see if the place was clear. After waiting some minutes, and his messenger not returning, another savage was sent to hurry him back.

He, also, did not return, and An-ga-wam began to grow uneasy. He waited half an hour, and then started with his whole force up the slope.

The band had fully entered the defile, and was pressing on up the slope, when the first man halted with a cry of wonder. There, in the pass before them, lay their dead comrades, the men who had been sent before. Each had the mark of the hatchet on his head, and must have died at a single blow.

They paused, irresolutely, and looked about them. Not a sound came from the rocks, to tell by whose hand the warriors met their fate. Should they turn and fly? They looked at their leader. His face had not changed, and his eyes searched out the crevices and nooks in the rocks above, for a solution of the mystery.

Still, no sound was heard, and An-ga-wam made a silent motion with his hand. Four of the warriors lifted the bodies, and laid them aside, close to the walls of the defile. This done, the party pushed on, until startled by a shout over their heads.

Looking in the direction of the sound, they saw that a young man had come out upon the ledge, holding a rifle in his hand, which he now pointed at the heart of An-ga-wam.

"Move an inch from the spot where you stand," he said, sternly, "and a bullet is in your heart."

The bronzed face of An-ga-wam was immovable, and he answered, quickly:

"Has the white man anything to say to An-ga-wam? The warrior's ears are open. He will listen."

"Let the Hurons go back as they came, and follow no more upon the footsteps of the Pleasant Voice and her friends."

"Why should they do this?"

"Lest their fate be like unto these," pointing downward at the dead Hurons.

"Let our white brother listen. He is a brave man. He is also just. An-ga-wam only asks for Me-rah. Give her to us, and go where you please. An-ga-wam will be your friend. Me-rah belongs to the Hurons."

"You cannot have her. Go back as you came."

The face of the Indian darkened. "We will not go back. Does our white brother take us for fools? Shall we give up what is already in our hands?"

"Your fate be on your own heads, then. You shall pay the penalty of your evil deeds. You have come upon the house of a kind old man in the night, and murdered him, and taken his innocent daughter into hopeless captivity. Your friend and fellow-murderer Hau-do, is dead. Remember how he died."

"He died like a dog, because he struck a warrior from behind. He was a murderer."

"So is An-ga-wam. Hau-do died by the hatchet, in the hand of the father of the man he had killed. You shall die by my hand."

"An-ga-wam is a chief. When his time comes, he will be ready to go. If it is now, well; he will not shrink. But he will not die alone. The white man may shoot him, but he dies the next moment by the bullets of the Hurons. Does my white brother see?"

"I have not told you, my red friend how he will die," replied the young scout. "Let him look in front, and he will see what his fate is to be."

The young man disappeared as he spoke, and obeying the implied command, the savages looked up the slope, and saw something which blanched their cheeks with fear, stout-hearted as they were. A few yards above them, a huge boulder, which had hung for years by a single point of rock, had lost its support, and was now upheld only by small props, which the fingers of Ben were removing, so that a single touch would send it whirling down upon them from that dizzy height. Its size was such that it would sweep the pass, carrying all before it. A single cry, the only one which their great peril had power to wring from them, attested their fear.

"We do it to save the lives of women," cried Ben, as he knocked away the last support.

Crash! The boulder struck the edge of the opening, spun half-round, and went down with a velocity which nothing could stay. They turned and fled, vainly, from their coming fate.

Clearing a bloody path to the ground below, down went the giant boulder. Out of the nine men who entered the defile, all were slain but two, who jammed themselves into the rocky crevices, and escaped the monster.

These two rose when the rock had passed, and turned to run. Two rifles cracked, and they fell—one dead, the other wounded. The brothers ran quickly down the slope, past the mass of corruption they had been forced to make to save the lives of the maidens and their own, and reached the last of the fallen. One had been shot through the head. The other was An-ga-wam, who had received a ball in the left side, from which the blood was gushing, and he lay gasping his life away.

"Is there any thing I can do for you?" said Alph, bending over him, and trying to stanch the blood which flowed from his wound.

The dying savage turned his fierce eye upon him. But it was fast glazing, and he could not speak for some moments, as the blood rose into his throat. He raised his hand to his mouth, with an impatient gesture. Alph gave him a drink from his canteen, and he was able to speak.

"White man," said he, in the French-Canadian dialect, "you have triumphed at last, and I see in my fate an emblem of the fate of my nation. As I die to-day, a bloody death, such will be the fate of my nation at the hands of the white man. Their fire-water is too strong for the Indian; it poisons him, and he dies! I go to the happy hunting-grounds of my people. May you never come there to vex us. Is Me-rah with you?"

"Yes," replied Alph.

"You must be kind to the maiden. Among the Hurons, our love was great for the young prophetess, because she had learned from the Withered Oak, and his words were good.

"Come nearer, and I will tell you a secret. Tell it thou to Me-rah, for she knows it not. She is not altogether an Indian; some of the accursed blood flows in her veins. Her father was a Frenchman, dead long ago, and her mother a Huron. Tell her this. Raise me up."

They lifted him, and his wild eye turned quickly upon rock and tree and sky, then glazed, and was fixed forever!

The brothers returned to the island, their labor being done. They never told the maidens how the Indians died; only said they would trouble them no more.

Next day they set out upon their return. One Indian tried to give them trouble. He died by the rifle of Ben, and his body was left to rot upon the earth where he fell.

The journey was a long and weary one, but they reached home at last. Flora wept as she saw the ruin the hands of the savages had made. They did not long remain here. Passing down the river, they found a home in Albany, with some friends, while the brothers returned to their duty.

Through the long and bloody French and Indian wars the twins did good service to their country. When these were over they came to Albany for their reward. Each had won the epaulette of a lieutenant of foot, and no longer scouted for Sir William. The generals missed

their services, but they were useful in their new vocation, and followed the gallant Wolfe, when he won undying fame upon the Plains of Abraham. They did their duty as men, and received promotion for the work they did upon that bloody field, where Wolfe and Montcalm fell.

We invite the attention of the reader to a scene upon the banks of the Mohawk. The Indian wars are over. The wise policy of Sir William has cemented the tribes in a closer union with the English, and all is peace and harmony. A group have gathered at evening upon the Mohawk. We look about us. It is the spot where Middleton's house stood, and again the hand of peaceful husbandry has been at work.

A new house has taken the place of the old, and an air of pleasant quiet surrounded all.

The group upon the river consisted of three, and those persons we have known. Flora—not the one of other days, but a comely matron, with a peaceful joy shining out over the beautiful face.

Ben—sunburned, but handsome—looking with unutterable pride at a beautiful boy, playing on the greensward, a few paces distant.

"Have you thought what night it is, Benjamin?"

"How?"

"This day five years, our peaceful home was in flames, and I a prisoner in the hands of the Indians."

"You are right; I never thought of that. I was thinking of another day."

"And that?"

"The day you became my wife."

"You are sorry for that, I almost know," said Flora, laughing. "But is it not nearly time for them to come?"

"Is it not strange that Alph should find his treasure in a Huron village, as I did mine? I am glad for Alph's sake, that the dying Indian told us she was not all of Huron blood."

"So am I. She is a noble woman, and I love her dearly. Her Christian name of Mary sounds odd to me. I shall continue to call her Me-rah. There they come!"

Two persons emerged from the woods, and rode swiftly toward them. They were Alph and our friend, Me-rah, no more changed than the couple we first introduced.

"How well Me-rah rides," said Ben, rising. "Almost as well as yourself, my dear Flora."

"Almost! Quite as well. Let us go and meet them. I hope they have brought the baby."

A few words will explain. Alph, on his return from his campaign, had found Me-rah, happy and beloved, at the house where he had placed her. The refinements of life had corrected many little eccentricities, and he saw that she was a noble, true woman. When Ben was married, he took her for his wife, and settled on a plantation, a little down the river from his brother. And there they lived happily.

Big Sam had returned with them to his old home, and was now acting as overseer for Ben, while Tiny performed the same office for Alph. Neither of the two ever tired of recounting their adventures among the Hurons, even when their hair was growing gray.

THE END.

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